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THE FATHERHOOD OF DEATH

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—JOHN xii. 31, 32.

THE FATHERHOOD OF DEATH *

I

CERTAIN Greeks wished to see Jesus, and they applied for help to the Greek-named apostles. There does not seem to have been an interview in their mind. They were proselytes to Judaism on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Jesus had just made His royal entry, and He was the talk of the town. They would not miss one of the great sights of their journey. Visit Jerusalem as proselytes, and not see the last sensation, the possible Messiah! As soon would an English pervert go to Rome, and not see the Pope.

When Jesus was told, it produced a singular effect upon Him. It was a small matter apparently; but things affect us as they find us; and this fell on a soul in great tension and

* Preached at the City Temple on behalf of the London Missionary Society.

vision. Heathen, then, were curious about the Messiah of the Jews! Was He gratified by the attention of a new world, as a British preacher might be with an American public? No, it seemed to Him like a straw on the wind of the Spirit. It was like the weeds Columbus met at sea. It was the beginning of a new world. These men were the harbingers of a new time. Here were the swallows, spring was at the door, and summer on the way.

But the worst storm of the winter was still to come. It meant death. It meant His cross.

Jesus had always felt that His earthly mission was to the Jews. His ointment was held for the time in that small alabaster-box. But you remember how the universal scope of His work was borne in upon Him in contact with the Syrophenician woman. And at the same time He was forced by the attitude of the Jews to face an early death. The two convictions, universality and death, were one. There was but one way for His work to become universal. To fill the world with the healing odour, the box must be broken. The emancipation of His gospel must come by His death. Already He had seen death to be *inevitable* from without, from the temper of His foes. He *could* not escape it. Now it is carried home to

Him, how *necessary* it was from within, from His Father. He *must* not escape it. His work required it. It was in God's will. The will of the Pharisees becomes to Him, by a sure mystery and miracle, the will of God. Both willed His death. But how different the intention! What He realised from the Syrophenician now comes home anew, but with tragedy and glory.

So when the disciples thought to gratify Him by the news of His popularity, His reply was mixed, and it was disconcerting. He was elated, indeed, for a moment. "The hour is come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Ah, at last! they thought. But the only way to such glory filled Him with melancholy. "Except a corn of wheat die." What! harping on death at such a time! They did not understand it. But He was often careless whether they understood or not. We are much too lucid for His greatness. He was not now teaching, but soliloquising. The agony struck home to Him. Gethsemane had begun. The temptation was resumed. He saw the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. It was not their pagan splendour, but the glory they might yield to God, if Messiah put out His latent powers and became their literal King. He flushed to anticipate the scene. He saw His own Puritan race keen for a lead.

He saw empire wide open to such powers as His, where He might serve God on a royal scale, and make Him an offering of a conquered world. Yet He saw just as surely that for Him that way was barred. Swift and universal empire, even if beneficent, could be neither Divine nor final. It fitted neither the true God nor the real world, neither grace nor need. And it was too vulgar for His soul. His vast powers were to be called in at a moral bidding. They were to be fixed on a task not only obscure, but bewildering, unpopular, and apparently futile. His star rose, only to be smothered by the black cloud of death. His joy suddenly sweeps round to sorrow. A world was before Him, His foot was on the frontier—and He must turn away to die. How like was the Moses of the new Israel to the Moses of the old! It was bitter. If a man make his fortune just to find he has heart disease and cannot last a twelvemonth it is bitter enough. And life is full of such fates. But these are minor bitternesses compared to the misery that the prospect of death brought to Him who was the fulness of life and power for good. And even that, again, was small and personal compared to another grief. It was the grief of knowing that His duty would bring not only trouble but perdition to the Israel He loved.

His death must be the damnation of the race He could have imperialised. It was not the darkness of death, but the damnation in it that struck through Him, and turned his sadness to His passion. It is agony for a man to do for conscience what he knows may ruin his family. How much more when he has to do what will condemn them, what will bring out all the evil in them and be death unto death to them; what will drive them to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, call His sacrifice a mere craze and His mission lunacy—yea, to protect themselves by putting Him away? That, you will remember, was what Christ's own family thought when He took up His work. They went out to bring Him back as mad, and put Him under restraint. And it was what His whole nation were coming to think also. And so, when an occasion, however trivial, bore this swiftly and sharply in on Him, it was almost more than He could bear. That was the case now: "How is My soul troubled! Father, spare Me this hour." And the Father would not. Jesus well-nigh lost heart at the revived sense of His tragic doom, of involving in calamity all He loved. So He did once before, when He saw the awful result of His work in family estrangement and the breaking up

of homes. "It is dreadful," He said. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I crushed until it be over!" (Luke xii. 50.)

But the attack only called out the resources of His solemn will. He stood still and silent. The passion had begun. He was conquering His distress by prayer. He always did. Beware of soliloquy (you poor Hamlets of an unhinged age!) if it do not turn to prayer. He recovered His spiritual self-command, which was His habitual obedience to the purpose of God. And He not only regained calm; He rose to exaltation again. Calm will not meet depression. Depression is in the nature of a passion with such souls as His, and it must be expelled by a counter-passion of faith and action. He rose to the eternal, glorious issue before Him. "I die alone. But unless I die I am more alone. If I die I bear much fruit." The prize was the world, the enemy the prince of this world; the work was judgment; the conflict the decisive battle of the immortal sinful soul; the pressure was the Father's will. So from the anguish of "Now is My soul troubled. What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour," He swept upward in spirit to the Father's side. There only had He true vision of the kingdom of the world and its glory. There the end is clear from the

beginning. "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name." And as a peal of thunder broke near it coincided for Him on His holy height with the inward voice of God. "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out [of the earth]. And I, if I be raised from the earth, shall draw all men unto Me." He meant His departure to the Father by death, and not the specific miracle of His resurrection or His ascension.

And the great words, seen by John in the light of long years after, seemed to him to carry a side reference so full of Divine irony that he could not refrain from alluding to it. The double sense of the word "lifted up" suggested to John a solemn irony of contrast between the eternal exaltation of heaven (which Christ meant) and the shameful elevation of a few feet from earth on the cross. And he notes the suggestion as he goes by. "The Lord's words had in them the note of death and even a hint of crucifixion." Christ is cast by the Jews out of life, raised above the ground on the cross, above all the world in the spirit. But in the act, by the greatest irony in history, He casts Satan out of the world. Adjudged to death He judges to death the power which slew Him.

And while Satan is cast out from men and from his throne, the outcast Christ is set on His throne, strong enough to draw all men away from Satan after Him.

Our modern experience is against a personal Satan. But Christ's was the other way. And if we must choose here between Christ and the modern mind, surely He who really redeemed from evil must know whether the reality He fought was chiefly a principle or a person. But that by the way.

It was the Cross that catholicised Christ, and eternalised Him. It rent the husk of Israel which bound His incarnate life. It broke the pot in which the tree of life was nursed, and transplanted it to the open air and the whole earth. The Cross is the point at which history is made an integral part of eternity.

Christ must die to come really near mankind. The greatest power on life acts from the realm of the dead. "More and more we are ruled by the dead," says Comte. You have the same thought in John xvi., "I will see you again, for I go to My Father." And it is in the mysterious words, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended." The real intimacy of contact was possible only under spiritual conditions.

The stamp of universality in Christ's religion,

then, lies not chiefly in His teaching. That was for the lost sheep of Israel, and much of it for the hour only. It lies in His work more than in His word. He was a man of action more than of speech; He said little of what He did most. Most martyrs have little to say. His word lies in His healing more than His teaching. It lies in the Cross, which continued His healing rather than His speaking, and which crowned His deeds rather than His truths. There is more of the cross that He came for in His cures than in His doctrine. The Cross was not central to Christ's teaching as the kingdom was; but it was central to what is more than His teaching —to His healing, to His Person, work, and victory. It is more original than His teaching, and more universal. It is by the Cross that He chiefly reaches the world. What goes deepest to the soul goes farthest with the world. And Christianity spread, not as a religion of truth, but of power, help, healing, resurrection, redemption. Harnack's missionary history of the first Church has just made that clear. It was not the teaching of Jesus that made and spread it, but the gospel of the Christ. It was, says Harnack, these four powers—the one living God, Christ as Saviour and Judge, the Resurrection, and the godly discipline of the Church.

The great and real charter of missions, therefore, lies not in any express command of Christ. They would be just as binding on us if the command at the close of Matthew's Gospel had dropped off with the last page of the first manuscript. They would arise, as they did for Paul, not out of any injunction, but out of the nature of Christ's Person, and especially from His Cross, His resurrection, and His exalted life, judgment, and reign. If they had not been commanded by Christ they would have been invented by His Holy Spirit. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me [as the risen Crucified], that I might preach Him among the Gentiles." The imperative of missions is rather in the gospel than in the Gospels, in the urgency of the risen Christ than in the precept of the Christ on earth. They are a dispensation of the Spirit. So entirely are missions supernatural in their nature that they must rise and fall with our faith in the supernatural, with the reality of the Cross to us, and of the resurrection, and of our relations with the living Christ. Our missions will escape from chronic difficulties when our Church recovers the ruling note of the redeeming Cross and the accent of the Holy Ghost.

But this passage of my text *is* an utterance of

Christ in which the Cross and its missionary energy are central. You will note that verses 31, 32 go together to complete Christ's thought of His universal victory, and its condition. That victory lies in the Cross, and in the Cross in two aspects: (1) As the real exaltation of Christ, as His real victory. That victory was not gained in the Resurrection, but only avouched by God there. It was in the Cross that Christ conquered. It was there that Christianity was set up. The Church was founded there. The Resurrection and Pentecost started the Church, but it was the Cross that founded it. Its history begins with the Resurrection, but its life begins with the Cross. The Cross did what the Resurrection published. (2) As the judgment of the world-power. I would develop these thoughts.

II

The Cross meant not only death, but a judgment-death. Christ's death is at the root of our missions, not only as a sacrificial death, but as a judgment-death. The Lord Himself so regards it. His drawing of the world lay close in His thought to His judgment on the prince and power of the world. The holiness of Christ was the one thing damnatory to the Satanic

power. And it was His death which consummated that holiness. It was His death, therefore, that was Satan's fatal doom. It was not His dying that saved, but the holiness of it. In the Cross took place the holy judgment which made Christ sin's destroyer and the spiritual Master of the universe. His exorcism of Satan was in the same act His conquest of man. "Now is the judgment of this world," He said Himself. And what we call the last judgment is only the completion of the deadly judgment passed on collective evil in the Cross. The greatest judgment that God ever sent on a wicked world was no mere catastrophe; it was Christ, and His Cross, and His salvation. For our deserts God gave us—Christ. What was done in the Cross is a greater thing than the last judgment itself can be, however sublimely you conceive it. For the last judgment is something done in Humanity or on it; but the Cross was something done in the soul of Christ. And great as Humanity is, the soul of Christ is greater still.

Our missionary salvation rests in this judgment and destruction of sin already done. "In the paradox of the Saviour-Judge," says Harnack, "Christianity possesses one of its most characteristic ideas, and one which gave it a

special superiority over other religions." And if Christ crucified judge the world, it means that the world is adjudged to Christ. The great missionary motive is the faith that in the Cross the world has been adjudged in reversion to Christ. You cannot separate the missionary idea, the saving idea, from the idea of Christ's judgment and Christ's right.

But what we can do is this; we can separate the missionary idea from an excessive dependence on future judgment. Its real root is here, that the prince of this world has been judged. The missionary history of the Church is Christ's slow entrance on the right which He set up once for all in His Cross.

It is sometimes said that it was the awful sense of the last judgment that was the mainspring of missions a hundred years ago; that they arose from the passion to save the heathen from hell. It is said that their inspiration was eschatological, and we are now ethical; and hence that the decay of belief in a sure hell for the unevangelised heathen must lead to a decay in missionary zeal. And no doubt this belief did play a great part in the missionary zeal of that time, as it did with the first Church. But the principle was not essentially wrong. The connection between the judgment idea and

the missionary idea is a real one. The judgment at the end of history is only the corollary of the judgment at the centre of history, and the close of that daily judgment in which we live. It is the sequel of the Cross, where the soul of evil was judged and cast out by the soul of Christ. The mainspring of missions is not the judgment that *will fall*, but the judgment that *has fallen* in the Cross. It is not pity but faith, not so much pity for perishing heathen, but faith and zeal for Christ's crown rights set up for ever in the deed decisive for all the world. This is steadier than our views of the future, and it will carry our missions better. Oh! my heart bleeds often with pity of poor men, women, children, and cattle. But I wish it moved as freely to Christ, and swelled with the faith and love of Him, with the joy and strength of His victory, the certainty of His sure control. I sink under what has to be done for the world, till I realise that it is all less than what has been done and put into the charge of our faith and word. The world's awful need is less than Christ's awful victory. And the devils we meet were all foredamned in the Satan He ruined. The wickedness of the world is, after all, "a bull in a net," a chained beast kicking himself to death. Our creed is right, but our practical religion is not so

right. We do hold that Christ vanquished evil. But the weakness of much current work and preaching is that it betrays more sense of what has yet to be done than of what has been done. We feel man's need more than Christ's fulness. We speak as men to whom the burden of reformation is a closer reality than the faith of redemption. And many of the apostles of forward movements do not impress me as basing social reform on the evangelical passion, which they seem to treat with contempt, silent or sharp. They lose the soul in serving Christ, like Martha. They do what Maeterlinck dreads: they give the lighthouse oil away to the neighbours.

Christ has judged the prince of the world and doomed its principle. He did so by taking on Himself the judgment of the world. He brought forth judgment unto victory. He converted penalty, by holiness, into triumph. He took sin, was made sin, and He made it righteousness. Satan is cursed for ever by the curse Christ bore. He broke a universal curse into a universal blessing, And what He did, He did once for ever and for all. His religion is absolute and final. Yet it does not damn other religions, but only the evil and the inadequacy in them. It interprets them, trans-

figures them, gives them to themselves. It judges them into their true place. It criticises them in the sense of "appreciating" them. It does not denounce them. It does not say that all religious founders outside Him are thieves and robbers. I do not believe Christ ever said that. What Christ did was to immortalise the good, and ban the evil, and paralyse Satanic power. And He did it by active holiness. What He won was God's moral victory in sinful man. It was a victory of conscience; and conscience is the most universal thing, the most missionary thing, of all. It is what makes man man, and makes him one, and makes him eternal. The conscience that redeems the conscience has the reversion of all mankind. It is not kind pity nor free thought that missions the world, but redeemed conscience. Look at the Old Testament prophets. It was the mighty moral element in their idea of a holy God and Saviour that forced them out of a narrow Israel into a universal faith. So it was Christ's holy death that catholicised His life. What goes deepest to the conscience goes widest to the world. The more completely we feel sin to be condemned in the Cross the more power and commandment we have to carry the absolution to the ends of the earth. The more the gospel

is moralised, and the more ethical the Atonement is made, so much the more promise it has for missions.

I do not for a moment say that we must always go straight to the heathen, at home or abroad, and assail them with these truths. They are the deep motive of the Church rather than the first method of the missionary. The gospel of forgiveness is now the Church's central word, and it is the mainspring of its aggressive work. The Church can only be missionary as it is remissionary. But this is not necessarily its first word, either with the heathen or with the young. The real meaning of it is often (and perhaps mostly) unfelt till there is some progress in the Christian life. Harnack says that the preaching of forgiveness in the deep, evangelical sense was not so prominent in the first spread of the Church as some of the other Christian powers he names. To the Church itself it did not come home till the Reformation. But now it has come home, and it must always be the mainspring of missions, as it is the marrow of the gospel. You may always measure the value to yourselves of Christ's Cross by your interest in missions. And it is a safe test of the Spirit's presence in a Church. They are of the essence of an

apostolic Church as distinct from a Church of culture, or a school of thought, or a social club. Truths like grace, atonement, judgment, and redemption, may be strange or remote to the individual; because faith often lives with the way of past generations of faith upon it. But for the Church these truths are necessary, for its ministers central, and for its missions vital. They may not be the missionary's stock-in-trade which he sets out as soon as he lands, but they are always his capital and his inspiration. Missions are so hard that they draw on the Church's last reserves. And the missionary needs all his faith of God's patience with himself to enable him to hope on for the heathendom to which he settles down when the novelty is by.

III

But Christ's death was not only an act of judgment, but an act of sacrifice both to God and to man. There should be no doubt that the first thing in Christ's mind was always His action on God, His sacrifice to Him, His obedience to God's will, and His answer to His love. And this is the first charge upon the Church which Christ's sacrifice founded. Its function is access to God before service to man. "Ye are

bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. vii. 23). "The main function of the New Testament Church is approach to God," says Dr. Lindsay. The service of man is but one of the forms in which the Church offers itself to God. The Church is first a priest to God and then a blessing to men. The popular idea of the Church, the journalist's idea, is quite wrong. It regards it as an instrument for social service, with no more sacrifice, worship, or thought than contributes to that end. This is an idea of the Church which is inevitable wherever faith has ceased to find its object in the atonement Christ made to God, and is transferred to the pity Christ spent on men.

But though that be so, when Christ speaks here of the way He draws men, He is speaking of the effect of His sacrifice on them and their affairs. He speaks of His service of man as perpetual even in heaven. But it is still sacrificial. He is active in heaven with God, in a priesthood of self-oblation, which is service, blessing, and intercession. He works on men by working for them still, in love, pity, help, sacrifice, and the moving Cross. "Christ is crucified to the world's end." His great sacrifice to God is always prolonged as heavenly service

to man. What He won by sacrifice He keeps by it. The Cross leads the generations on. He knew that, however it might be with a Satan, man would yield only to a spell, and not to a rod. Salvation and coercion will not go together. If it is your duty to coerce, you must leave to others the task of saving. The employer cannot evangelise his workmen. Church and State can only prosper apart. It is one of the banes of our missionary enterprise that it comes to the heathen from a dominant militant race. And it has been the curse of Catholic missions, in Central America for instance, that they were carried on by a Church, not only militant, but military. That is what neutralises the self-sacrifice even of Jesuits. The Cross was not only His message, it was His method. Oh! why does our method not oftener preach our message? His way was the way of service, not dominion; of sympathy, not suppression; of healing, not harrying; of atonement, and not exaction; of affinity, not of Empire.

These are the methods of Islam. And—

> "The moon of Mahomet
> Hath risen, and it will set;
> While, blazoned still on Heaven's immortal noon,
> The Cross shall lead the generations on."

But, strictly, it is not the Cross that leads after all. That may mean but the method of Jesus. It needs His secret. And His secret is Himself. It is the Christ who was exalted by the Cross. It is the living Lord, whose sacrifice is eternal, whose blessing is continual, and His intercession never fails. "Exalted, I will draw all men unto Me."

Mr. Booth says of the Congregationalists that their tendency is to interpret the belief in Christ simply as "Christian humanitarianism," "not primarily as that which involves faith in the great sacrifice of a risen Saviour, but rather as the acceptance of an ideal affecting human life and human relationships." Well, if that become our ruling note our missionary passion is doomed. But is it so? Take Mr. Booth cautiously. His idea of worship seems to be the Catholic. He will hardly call our tabernacles houses of God; and his idea of the gospel is not missionary, but social. He sets little store by conversion compared with social reform. He observes well, but divines little. And he omits our faith in the living, indwelling Christ. We may have slackened in our grasp of the atoning Christ, but we have not, or not yet, in our faith of the living Christ.

It is a living Christ with whom we have to

do. What flows from Him is not a mere old influence; it is not a mere fascination; it is not a humanitarian ideal, it is the Holy Spirit whom He sends. The spell that draws us to Christ is not the attraction of a fine spectacle or the glamour of a rare idea; it is the result of His own unseen action, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; actual, valid, creative in our souls. He does not simply charm men by the noble pathos of His grievous death into the worship of a Divine sorrow. He recreates men by the power of an atoning death, eternalised in His risen life. When He said He would draw all men to Him, do you think He was only predicting how great His influence would become? Was He only prophesying that He would light such a candle as could never be put out? There is a foresight that lights up the vision of the dying. Did that tell Him how engaging His memory and death would be, how great the beauty of His pity and His woe? Was that all? Was He only saying that His would rank among the great purifying tragedies of the race, which move men as they sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings? Nay, He was doing more than predicting what would happen. He was promising what He would do, pro-

mising His active interest and renewing Spirit. Was it only His fate that was to draw men, or was it His immortal energy and personal concern? Is His gospel His echo or is it His word? Surely it is purpose, and not prophecy, we have here—a promise of what He would do, and not merely a forecast of what men would feel. Christianity is not the worship of a remote beauty, a mighty memory, or statuesque ideal; it is our standing answer to One who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

If the aggressive and missionary power of Christianity lay simply in Christ's ideal, or His engaging charm, or the pathos of His fate, then the best missionaries would be those men of genius and culture whose first quality was spiritual taste rather than vital faith; men who had the talent to depict spiritual beauty rather than the sacramental power of help, healing, and vital redemption. The gospel word would then be a fine statement, not a sacrament; poetry, perhaps, but not power for life. But preaching which ceases to be sacramental ceases to live, and it leaves men victims to material sacraments and unholy priests. The proselytiser then takes the place of the missionary, and the Church stands where the gospel ought to be. But the saving sacra-

ment is the sacrament of the Word and of the living faith it stirs. And the gospel word ceases to be sacramental if the Cross cease to be sacerdotal, if it be tragic and no more, if it be martyrdom and not atonement. It is the word of a constant sacrificial work. It creates a priestly Church as the body of the great High Priest. It stirs a faith which bears the world's sin on its heart in holy union with Christ. It prays for the whole world because it shares in His perpetual intercession for the world, and it preaches and toils because it shares His perpetual blessing of it, and His perpetual gift to it of Himself and His death-made life. It is that faith that spreads the Church; not humanitarianism, not ideal-worship, not a taste for sanctity, but the priestly life of a priestly Church in a priestly Lord. The only time Paul calls himself a priest is in describing his missionary work (Rom. xv. 16): "I am a ministering priest of Jesus Christ. I minister as a priest His gospel, and the offering I make on His altar is the heathen, and the consecration of it is the Holy Ghost." Never be it forgotten that in the New Testament the main function of the Church is, not the service of man, but the approach to God. And that is the main function of the Church

because it is the main function of its Lord. It is also the condition of the best service of man; and the Cross which condenses it all as an offering to God is itself the gift to man of the Father's heart.

IV

The Cross is the gift of the Father's heart! That is a hard saying. Yet it was the faith of Christ. "Father," He said, "glorify Thy Name," as if He had said, "In My Cross reveal Thine." He gave as it was given Him, and what He gave was the Cross. To sit on His right hand and on His left was not His to give, but to be crucified on His right and left was. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me; *and where I am there shall also My servant be.*' Cannot you hear that from the cross itself? Do you think that is simply a promise of glory? It is so exegetically. But if it is no more than that, why is it embedded in a context of death and suffering only? For Christ, death and glory were one. It was not that the shame led to the glory. It was the glory. Paul, at least, gloried in that shame. From the cross itself the words thrill our faith. "Where I am there shall My servant be,"

"Come up unto Me" here. He gave the Cross, and gave as He received. He received the Cross. It was the Father's first gift and great grace to the Son; the Resurrection was but the second. What greater gift is there to us than a great trust and a great opportunity? If He gave the Son to have life, He also gave Him to have death, the power divinely to die. And how could He give Him what He had not in Himself? The Cross came first from the Father, in whom it is eternal. It is no temporary expedient, no historic accident. The Father is the Redeemer behind all. The source of the Father's grace is not the Son, but the Father. That was Christ's own faith. "I will draw all men unto Me," He said. Yes, but He also said, "No man cometh unto Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him." We know the priesthood and mediation of the Son. Does it say nothing of a priesthood and mediation of the Father? The Son in His greatest work could do nothing but what He saw the Father do. Whatever He offered to the Father, He only gave Him back His own. God Himself set forth the propitiation of Christ. When Christ redeemed His Church He could do nothing but the Father's work. The Cross is God working in Christ. Shall we say suffering? Why not?

"It is a patripassian heresy." But there is the suffering of identity and the suffering of sympathy. The Father did not suffer as the Son (that were too Sabellian), but He suffered with the Son. Yea, even when Christ consented to die He did what He saw the Father do. It cost the Father at least as much as the Son. When He spared not His Son, did He spare Himself? Did a sword pierce the mother's soul, and not the Father's also? And did it not grieve the Holy Ghost? Our redemption drew upon the whole Godhead. Father and Spirit were not spectators only of the Son's agony, nor only recipients of His sacrifice. They were involved in it. It takes little divinity to accept sacrifice. It is the art of the accomplished Egoist. The divine thing is to make it. It was no trifle for the Son to bring us to the Father; has it been a trifle for the Father to draw you to the Son, to appoint the providence that gave you knowledge of the Son by all the history of the Church till its baptism fell on you, and to overcome the reluctance that still hesitates to come up to the Cross, and be at home there? It is the exalted Son that draws men. Yes, but it is the Father that exalted Him, "placarded" Him (Gal. iii. 1) before us in crucified glory, and still draws every knee to bow to His humiliation.

It was the Father that put Christ upon the cross. Would He have stayed there had it not been so, had it not been God's trust to him? For the Son Fatherhood had death in it. It meant disheartenment, failure, desertion, heart-break. The revelation of the Father had to speak that tongue. The God who saves to the uttermost saves from the uttermost. He is the God of the God-forsaken, the Father of the fatherless. "*My God*," said Christ then, not "My Father." When our soul awoke in hell He was there. The faith of the saved may be radiant, but the faith of the Saviour, and the saving hour, had to be a darkling faith. But it is the faith that matters; it is neither the light nor the dark.

At least we may say that Fatherhood, *if it is to be universal*, means death. It cannot be missionary without the Cross. It might love the lovely without the Cross, but it could not redeem, and redeem the bad, black world. It was a fatherly death that Christ obeyed to gain the world. The Cross is more called for by the fatherhood of such a world than by its sovereignty. Is it not? It is a tragic world; there is a curse on it. And Fatherhood could not come home to it, to its whole grim reality, if it did not speak its most tragic note. So

much of our shallow liberalism never strikes that note. The revelation of the Father may indeed belong to the poetry of life, but it is to the sternest poetry. It is no idyll; it is tragedy, the tragedy of history. The world's new life begins in its dreadest hour. The kingdom's birth is the Redeemer's woe. And the joy of heaven was once in travail with a whole world. The universal Church of the Father is the firstborn of death. Death was never so solemn and great as when it became the word of the Father, and founded the Church to win the world.

So much of our shallow liberalism, I say, never strikes that tragic note, never opens the seven seals, and, therefore, never sounds our human greatness. We fling our pebbles at the mighty men of old whose views do not meet our gentler taste; but their minds and souls were oppressed with a sense that we have lost of God's greatness and man's. Their sense of man's greatness arose from their faith of God's greatness in redemption, not from their sense of the dignity of human nature. They did not, indeed, prosecute missions, but they made the faith from which missions grew. These did not arise from humanitarian sympathy, but from an evangelical faith largely on Calvinistic lines. It is often asked how Calvinism, with its limited area

of atonement, should have been so wide and urgent with its gospel. It is because the width of the gospel really springs from its depth, and its pity from its greatness. Everything that enhances the native purity of man, that extenuates his sin, that diminishes his guilt, and sets over him but a kind father, really belittles his greatness. Man can only have huge guilt because capable of great things (Matt. vi. 23). It is a tremendous power to be capable of sin against God. It betokens, as nothing else but holiness can do, the greatness of the soul, and its place and its issues. The greatest men, like Dante, Calvin, and Milton, who have dwelt on the horror of guilt, perdition, and hell have done so from no love of horrors, but as the obverse of their sense of the soul's greatness, of its affairs and issues, its destiny, and its doom. To belittle our guilt reduces also the greatness of Christ's work in destroying it. And to diminish that is to destroy its universality. Nothing that does not dredge the depths of the soul can cover the width of the world. Nay, the real promise for universal man rose from the depths of God Himself. I would venture to say that missions have more to hope for from a narrow creed which remains great than for a wide humanism that runs thin.

The recent decay of missionary faith has gone with a genial creed of much sensibility but no grandeur and little power.

You call these thoughts extravagant and forced perhaps. Many people do. They think Paul fantastic and John obscure. But these men were forced upon such faith by the compulsion of the Spirit. And on no lower truth can Christian missions thrive. The homely pieties cannot cope with the great world. We cannot rest missions on a religion of Fatherhood alone. The recent gospel of mere Fatherhood has been concurrent with a decay of missionary zeal. When that phase of Christianity knows itself it is Unitarianism, which has no missions because it has no gospel. Theological differences come out in a new light when the practical test of missions is applied. Some of them sink out of sight, but some become sharper than ever. One source of the decay in missionary interest is the decay in theological perception and conviction. Vagueness always lowers the temperature. And our missionary work reveals the difference between Unitarianism and ourselves to be very real. It lies in the very thing which made the Church, by making Christianity a mission. It lies in the Son's Cross, and its deep divinity. That Cross was in God's own

history; and it was no dark episode there, and no passing phase. The secret is Godhead is in the gospel of Atonement, and of Fatherhood by holy death. The whole question between Unitarianism and ourselves turns on this. It is the question of redemption by God's dying grace, and by a sacrifice in which the Son could not outdo the Father. It concerns the close of Christ's life, and not its beginning. The key of Christ is there, and not at His origin. It is a question of Christ's death and its interpretation. It concerns the Cross and what was done there once and for ever, and done from the last depths of God. That is the marrow of the gospel. *There* is that which makes Christ for ever different from the race He redeemed, and precious chiefly because of the difference. The Redeemer is more mighty by what He had not in common with men than by what He had. The Redeemer of all men is a new category. No man redeemed Him. A gospel in which Christ differs from men only in degree leaves Him still but a man, and soon ceases to win men or to hold them. Mankind could never owe itself to an individual man—even to the best. Such a gospel may impress men, but it does not master them and remake them. The greatest, divinest man cannot redeem or atone. "The redemption of

the soul is too costly for him, and it must be let alone for ever." Unless the Saviour be commensurate with mankind it is but a partial relief. But if he be commensurate with man he is other than the greatest man. And if he be not of the deepest in very God it is no redemption. It may help men, or improve, but it does not regenerate and re-create. The strength of our missions is not in what is common to all religions, but in what redeems them all from impotence by something it brings to all and finds in none.

The missions of a universal Father rest on a gospel of Fatherhood sovereign by death. Is it a strange thing, then, that missionaries should daily die as other men do not? They minister at that world-altar of the Father. They are specially delivered unto death. You cannot separate the mission and the Passion in a universal Christianity. There is no world crown without the Cross. The world can never conquer the world, nor civilisation master the human soul. War cannot do it, nor diplomacy, nor trade. One supreme empire is a deadly dream, a national superstition, the final futility of the proud, practical man. The victory which overcomes the world is faith; and faith not only trusts the Cross, but wears

it, lives it, and dies it. The Church that missions really dies with Christ, and its missionaries but show forth its death. They are priests of a sacrificial Church. You can serve, but you cannot save the democracy except by dying for it, and sometimes dying at its hands. Arnold Toynbee could have told you that. I saw and heard the working men he loved stone him with jeers, and in a few weeks he died. Hugh Price Hughes could have told you that. Percy Alden and Herbert Stead could tell you, and Silvester Horne will tell you soon, of the daily death that comes to the sacred lover of men. So neither can we save the heathen but by dying for them one way or another. Chalmers says it, and Stonehouse, and many a voice from beneath the altar and behind the veil. There is nothing finer nor more pathetic to me than the way in which missionaries unlearn the love of the old home, die to their native land, and wed their hearts to the people they have served and won; so that they cannot rest in England, but must return to lay their bones where they spent their hearts for Christ. How vulgar the common patriotisms seem beside this inverted home-sickness, this passion of a kingdom which has no frontiers and no favoured race, the passion of a homeless Christ! Think of Paton,

the aged, with his New Hebrideans. Here, in England, he might say—

> "From the lone station on the coral island
> Waters divide me and a waste of seas;
> But still my heart is true, their land is my land,
> And in my dreams I see my Hebrides."

We are too strange to the Cross if we are shocked at such demands. Some have been afraid of taking the Cross seriously lest they should be swept back from the Father into the old orthodoxies. But the fatherhood that does not take the Cross seriously and even sternly is sentiment and not faith. And it makes men too easy with themselves to be faithful to the world. One reason why the Church is too little missionary abroad is that it is not a missionary Church at home. It is established on good terms with its world instead of being a foreign mission from another. The fatherhood as Christ trusted it is our joy and crown, but it is also our doom. "I am crucified unto the world, and the world unto me." It is better to die with Christ than to live with the world, to be Christ's priest than the world's prince. It is not happier, but it is better. Back let us go, not only to Christ, but to the Cross, to behind the Cross, where we see it from the other side. Let us go

back from our social impatience to the effective way of faith—back from our exacting socialism, our moral rigorism, our critical severity, and the impotence of them all, to the holy, tender sacrifices of the Father's Cross and the contagious obedience of the beloved Son.

That is where missions arise and where the men are found. Success may bring money, but only the Cross brings both martyrs and heroes. We cannot stake our missionary enterprise upon results. But if we could, it would not be upon the converts but upon the missionaries; not upon the number of converts, but upon the cheerful faith, sacrifice, and courage of the missionaries and those behind them. Were the number of converts even less than it is, you cannot respect Paul, Boniface, Patrick, Paterson, Hannington, Mackay, Livingstone, Moffat, Chalmers without believing in missions. And without believing in missions you cannot even respect these men, you can but pity them. And the man that has only pity for such is in a pitiful case. There is no more heroic region of human valour. There is not in army or navy a focus of such bravery as each mission-house shows. There are no deeds that won our Empire so stirring to good blood as the exploits of Christ's kingdom in new

lands. There are no fortitudes so long, strong, and silent as those which underlie the early Christianity of a new race. Take Africa alone. In the eighteenth century the Moravians lost all their twelve missionaries on the West Coast. The Wesleyans followed them and lost sixty-three men in fifty years. The Basle Society lost in the same time twenty-nine men out of one hundred and seven. The American Society has lost, since 1847, fifty-four out of ninety. In Surinam, out of three hundred and ten missionaries one hundred and thirty-four succumbed in less than a century to the awful climate. The Central African Mission of the London Missionary Society was begun twenty-six years ago. There have been sent out forty-one missionaries. Of these twenty-one died after a mission life of about two and a half years, and eight retired from fever. I say nothing of the deaths of wives and children. The percentage of premature loss is fifty-three. This tremendous cost is only paralleled by the heavy casualties among the South Sea teachers in New Guinea. "The Report for 1894," says Mr. Horne, "contains the tragic statement that since the Mission was established, twenty years before, over one hundred and twenty had died of fever, poison, or massacre in New Guinea.

And yet more volunteers had only to be asked for and there was a quick, glad, eager response." I need only remind you of the dreadful mortality in the Baptist Congo Mission, where thirty men died in fifteen years, 1880–95 (besides wives or children), or in the Church Missionary Society, or the China Inland Mission. And there is always a ready supply of men and women to go on. Such records leave out the martyrdoms like Williams, Pattison, Hannington, Chalmers. They leave out the grief of relatives, the long struggle with isolation and solitude, the shame under the contempt of white men who are more intractable and heathen than the heathen themselves. And they were deaths not on the massed and fiery field, but on the lonely outpost plains.

How easy it would be to multiply such figures from all over the world! What is it all for? Why do men and women do these things? Because they have believed unto blood, and they are members, not only of Christ's Church, but of His Cross, and agents of His death. The largest family on earth is the fraternity of sorrow, and its firstborn are the company of the Cross. Sorrow and death is a universal tongue. It is the prepared language of a universal religion. And

if the missionary cannot understand it, his gospel is hid and lost. But they have learned it in its home with Christ and spoken it freely, and made it tell of endless sacrifice and love. I cannot remember since boyhood passing a day without pain; but I think my life a piece of disheartening self-indulgence when I read missionary biography and track its quavering red line of apostolic succession from the beginning till now. It is a past with a promise. That cannot be in vain. If it could, the greatest things would be the most futile and the cynic would be the only true prophet. These deeds and deaths reproduce themselves. They increase and multiply, and replenish the earth. And they nerve the Church with their solemn infection. In about ten years from 1876 the London Missionary Society lost in Central Africa ten men and nine had to retire—all out of twenty-three. Yet the Directors solemnly resolved "to prosecute the Mission with greater earnestness than ever." This was courage of the missionaries' own kind, and the bold strategy, the audacious prudence, of the Holy Ghost, such as the true-born soldier loves. It is the large, exalted, anointed recklessness that took Christ to the cross and won the world. And it is courage in the face of fearful odds,

such as a British race should love. What is our pittance of money, our fits of sympathy, beside long, lonely devotions like these multiplied all over the earth? Their voices haunt us from graves baking in African suns or soaking in malarial swamps, or watched by the lion and the lizard that cannot break their sleep. They demand that we shall not let their work be wasted, or their blood be like water spilt upon the ground, or their quiet resolve choked in the dust that stops their mouths. This work has cost too much to fail now. And it is a sacred investment that we can only save by investing more. The mission field is a great Aceldama and field of blood. It is the cemetery of the Lord's vanguard. There are too many precious bones mouldering there, and too many lives enshrined, for us to let it be trodden down by hordes of Paganism, black or white. And that soil, too, is fat with sacrificial blood and faithful dust. It is classic with martyr tombs. Any people is deeply sunk that permits the decay of its precious tombs. And how can we leave to barbarism the cells of these hermits of faith and saints of Christ? We can build them worthy shrines only by carrying forward their work.

But even that we cannot do by dwelling on

their heroism. Why did they go? Was it mere restless, soulless love of adventure? Is their story but a book for boys, or a theme for reciters? Why did they labour? Was it simply to escape ennui? Was it for a house in Park-lane? And did they die out of mere doggedness? They went because sent. They worked because God worked in them, and they died because He died and His death was sacramental in them. And if their work be prolonged and their dying repeated, it can only be because the death that was their inspiration becomes the spirit of our life and the soul of our soul. I know everything that can be said to belittle their heroism and make it look humdrum. It cannot be more humdrum than they often felt their daily round to be. But I am sure, too, that there was nothing belittling in the welcome they had from the brave beyond the river. And there was nothing common or mean in the meeting when their devotion rejoined its one source in Christ. He never ceases to remember His Cross in a way to transfigure every cross since then with a generous light. The reverence for missionary memories and graves is worthy sentiment. It is more: it is true emotion. I should think little of myself if I did not feel

it. But yet, that is not the passion which fills the ranks as fast as they are emptied. It is but the lily-work on the capitals; it is not the pillar of the faith. I know we do not make enough of our martyrs. I am sure that hagiology should be more used than it is in the education of the Church's young. The saints are beyond caring; the loss is ours. But all the same it is not upon saint worship that our faith stands, or moves to still greater things. We are not saved by self-sacrifice, not by the worship of it. "It is far easier," said Maeterlinck, "to sacrifice self than to fulfil our spiritual destiny." That destiny is to meet our high calling in Christ Jesus, to take Him for what He is, and find ourselves by the way in Him. It is not our sacrifice that tells, but our union with the sacrifice of Christ which is the sacrifice of God. There are many self-sacrificers for one true believer. Sacrifice is not the last word of our soul's duty. It is Christ, the holy will of God, the Saviour, and the world-Saviour. For we are only saved in a saved world. It is on this faith our missions stand, upon the passion of saved certainty, of soul conviction, of spiritual love which surmounts all spiritual egotism. The perpetual inspiration of missions and their staying power is not piety to the

fallen saints, nor is it the thrill of their grey romance. It is the experience of the like unearthly faith. It is self-sacrifice which does not think of the sacrifice, but of Christ. The greatest things have been done by men who had their eyes on something else than their self-sacrifice. Little turns on the self, little on the sacrifice, everything on the God. We have sometimes to sacrifice to Him the passion for sacrifice. What matters is not who sacrifices, nor what he sacrifices, but to whom we offer it all. Neither is Paul anything, nor the giving of my body to be burned, but Christ is all in all. The battle is too grim and long to be sustained by even sacred sentiment or spiritual romance. The more we know of the world the more doubtfully we ask, "Can such a world be saved?" And the more we know of Christian nations, the more incredulously we ask, "Can these be the saviours?" As we recoil discouraged, and sometimes disillusioned, from the poor and pauperised results of our philanthropy, we ask, with some bitterness at its waste, "Is this saving the people?" And as we read the history of the Church itself and its results of two thousand years we ask in despair, "And is the thing we see salvation?" But the more we know of Christ's Cross for

ourselves, the less can we believe that anything is beyond its power or any soul outside its destined range. We have a faith that outlasts even our impulses of sacrifice, our hot fits and our cold. It survives all the challenges of life. It is absolute against a world in arms. Our methods need criticism, but our principle is beyond it. Can that comfortable, greedy, selfish, wicked, devilish world be saved? Experience wavers. Common-sense denies. But faith is sure. It is already done. This is high ground; but I am not making a speech, even on missions; I am preaching the Gospel, which if it is not extravagant is not true. The great thing is already done. What needs doing is all less than has been done. What has to be done for the world is already done in God. "A glorious throne set on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." Is this mystical? But that is not the point. Is it real? Is it true at our real centre, where we are what we are, and where we measure the world? Our missions but proclaim on the housetop what is told us in the most secret place. The world has been saved. We live in the midst of a universal salvation, even if the whole world lie in wickedness. If all men else denied that, we know it. God has a few to whom He whispers in the ear.

Most of the world does deny it, and no few of the Church; but the New Testament is sure of it. Christ was sure of it. He *is* sure of it. And His certainty is more than all the misgivings of our experience. His faith in Himself takes possession of us. We have the Holy Ghost. God has given us the reconciliation. All things are yours—life, death, and the future, thrones, policies, and Satans, all heavens, worlds, and hells. "All things are delivered unto Me of the Father." "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Is it true? Are you quite sure it is true—quite, quite sure, with the certainty of the secret place, the solemn Church, the new life, and the old historic Word? Then arise, sing, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.

"Awake, our souls! away, our fears!
Let every trembling thought be gone!
Awake, and run the heavenly race,
And put a cheerful courage on."

FINAL JUDGMENT FULL SALVATION

"The prince of this world hath been judged."—JOHN xvi. 11.

FINAL JUDGMENT FULL SALVATION

LET us approach these words from our Lord's standpoint; then let us pass on to what they carry for the situation of His Church to-day. Christ always spoke to the historical occasion in the first place. He did not speak over His age to be direct only with us; he spoke to the great questions of His time. His task was as real for that day as for any. It was in solving the problem of His own generation that He solved the world's problem. He is what He is to us because of what He actually was to the complete spiritual situation around Him.

What, then, were the ruling issues of His age and race? Were they not these—sin, righteousness, and judgment?

I

And, first, note the relations of these three ideas. To know what sin is you must know

what righteousness is. To be quite sure of righteousness, you must be sure how it will stand at the end in relation to sin. It must stand over sin, and judge it, and destroy it. Judgment is not primarily punishment, nor is it a mere declaration of the state of the law, but it is the actual final establishment of righteousness upon the wreck of sin. The stroke of sin upon sanctity can only evoke judgment, which by the grace of Christ becomes salvation. In the world it is sin that judges righteousness, and does with it what it will. In the kingdom of God it is righteousness that judges sin, and does with it the will of God—it destroys it.

It was on these points, therefore, that Christ's quarrel with His contemporaries turned. It was there that He broke with His age and its leaders, and they with Him. It was there He ceased to be the mere child of His time. Both He and His foes believed in the kingdom of God. Both believed it to be a kingdom of righteousness. Both believed that it could only be set up by an act of Divine visitation and judgment. But they understood words differently. What is the righteousness of God? What is sin? What is the judgment of God? The answer of the Jews was prompt. "Righteousness is keeping our law. Sin is breaking or despising it. Judg-

ment is the interference of God to reward our righteousness, to confound those that despise it, to establish Israel and its code on the necks of the nations, and in sight of the world to declare Israel alone to be right, and all else wrong." Righteous judgment, as the Jewish type of Englishman would say, is to reward with empire the superior and constitutional people.

Now, to all this Christ gave the flattest denial. "I with My kingdom am the righteousness of God. To resist and renounce Me is sin. My victory is true judgment, and judgment begins at the house of God." That was a clear issue and challenge between Christ and Israel. it is the greatest ever presented to the world; and it is as real and great to-day as then. The verdict of the world was invited on it in the very act of going out with the gospel. The apostles really did what Paul did—they appealed unto Cæsar. They turned to the Gentiles; they went to the public; they appealed to human nature with the cause that Judea had condemned.

"We constitutionalists are righteous," said the Jews with entire sincerity. "You, Jesus, with your claims and criticisms, are the sinner of a most blasphemous sin. We must pass on you

the judgment of God, which is there to destroy sin and you, and to magnify the law you belittle. In the name of the very God and righteousness you preach, we suppress you as a schismatic. Would we could ignore you, but you will not allow us to do that. For God's sake we will stamp you out and your witness, and we shall call in the help of the State to do it. God cannot speak except by His legal Church and His imperial race, nor save the nation otherwise. And that the nation perish not, you who challenge that Church must die. That is how we conceive of sin, righteousness, and judgment."

It is an old, old story, but to-day it is as new as ever.

And the counter plea of Christ was: "You are not righteous, but, by your very constitutionalism and patriotism, you are the enemies of God and His righteousness. Were you the children of God you would recognise Me, who am the Son of God. If you did His will you would recognise My teaching. His sheep hear My voice. Your own past, if you could read it, appeals to you in Me no less than your own God. The sin of sins is yours. Sin is your relation to Me. Righteousness is the way I go. My rejection is your damnation. In the death you adjudge to Me I do a deed which is judgment to you.

The judgment of God is not through you upon Me, but through Me upon you. My suffering is your perdition. That is the destruction of sin by righteousness. It is the establishment of righteousness upon the neck of your sin once and for ever. It is the mortal wound of the world-power you serve. It is the doom of the worldly world in the worldly Israel. It is the central encounter of God with Satan, and the eternal victory."

Such was the moral issue presented to the world when the historic gospel went out on the lips of the apostles. Which was right? It is the moral issue on which every man, nation, and Church must give a practical verdict. It is no mere problem of history, no mere matter of antique interest, no mere collision between a nation and a genius that arose within it. That might describe the death of Socrates at the hands of Athens. But the controversy between Christ and Israel is vital to every age, and continued in it. The work of the Spirit is, by the preaching of the gospel, to carry conviction on this point home to the world. It is to master the world with the eternal gravity of this moral issue for every conscience and every people. It is to make certain the foregone finality of this spiritual victory for the whole

race. And it is to suggest to each Church that it is Churches, and not individuals, that are in peril of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Anglicanism to-day is doing with the Free Churches what Judaism did with Christ—it is ignoring, denying, and perverting the manifest signs and wonders in us of the Holy Ghost. It calls us bodies—it refuses to call us Churches.

II

Now let us take verse 11 in particular and work up to its strict sense. Verse 9 says that sin is measured by our relation to a Person and not a law. And verse 10 says that the Spirit of Christ coming from the Father shows that Christ is there, which further shows that His earthly claim was right. For had it been false it was not to the Father He would have gone when He left the world. Look closer.

Verse 9—"*The Spirit will convince the world of sin, in that they believe not in Me.*" He will show the real nature of sin. "How shall we work the works of God?" it was asked; and it was answered by Christ, "This is the work of God, to believe on Him whom He hath sent." Sin, you note, is not measured by a law, or a nation, or a society of any kind, but by

a Person. The righteousness of God was not in a requirement, system, book, or Church, but in a Person, and sin is defined by relation to Him. He came to reveal not only God but sin. The essence of sin is exposed by the touchstone of His presence, by our attitude to Him. He makes explicit what the sinfulness of sin is; He even aggravates it. He rouses the worst as well as the best of human nature. There is nothing that human nature hates like holy God. All the world's sin receives its sharpest expression when in contact with Christ; when, in face of His moral beauty, goodness, power, and claim, He is first ignored, then discarded, denounced, called the agent of Beelzebub, and hustled out of the world in the name of God. The great sin against God was done in the name of God by genuine believers, by a Church. The sin against the Holy Ghost is real enough; but it is the sin of an age, rather than of an individual; and it is the sin of an age's religion; not of its indifference or paganism, but its religion, its Church. It is the sin of men who believe in Satan enough to call satanic the very action of God. It is the sin of a religion. It is the sin of certain Churches in their treatment of others to-day. And it is preparing for certain Churches a great shock

and awakening. The power of the Spirit acts by confounding and humbling the world (especially that part of it in the Church) with this discovery, that there is but one sin, the sin of touching the Son of God in His spiritual effects, and yet practically calling Him the child of the devil, as the pre-Christian Church did. The Spirit's judgment is not on the intellectual sceptic; he is not a dangerous character in the Bible. It is the moral sceptic that is to be confounded, the Church worldling, the religious Pharisee, the breed of those who tried Christ the Trier of the reins, the living Conscience, and found Him wanting. They knew the law as He did not, but they knew no better than to judge their Judge. The conviction by the Spirit was the conviction of moral dullards, whether religious or worldly, whether pious or profane. It was the religious men without moral insight, men of the traditional, churchly, crusted, and patriotic conscience, men who said that conscience was, oh! a most tender place, and their conscience would not allow them to forget their dreams of Empire and recognise Christ or His claims. They believed in Empire, but not in the kingdom.

Verse 10—"*Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more.*" What is

the meaning of "because"? It is this: If He had not been right with the claims He made He could not have gone to the Father when He died. If He went to the Father, if His Spirit convinced men that He was there and was acting from there, then He had been right in the claims He made about His relations to the Father and about His judgment of the world, and especially of Israel's sin. The apostolic fact of His resurrection was proof that Israel's God confirmed the claim of Christ, and gave judgment for Him against Israel. That was what settled the matter for Paul. As soon as he was convinced that God had raised up Christ and set Him at His right hand in glory, the whole fabric of his Judaism gave way. God would not raise a fanatic, impostor, or blasphemer. The Spirit convinced Paul that Jesus was the Holy One and the Just—nay, the very Righteousness of God; that the sin of sins lay with the people who thought themselves the best of the good.

Sin, and righteousness, and salvation are the questions Christ answers; and they are questions addressed to the moral judgment. By your moral judgments you stand or fall. It is not by your views (even on the Resurrection), not by your pieties, mysticisms, sympathies

energies, or philanthropies, but by your moral verdicts and decisions, especially on persons, and essentially on Christ, that you are justified or condemned. What think ye of Christ in the way of moral verdict, moral attitude, personal committal, personal experience, and habit of soul? Your opinion is not asked about the miracle of His birth or any other single point. What is the actual, practical, habitual relation of your whole moral *self* to Him as a living personal whole? How do you dispose of the Self which determines your life, conduct, aspirations, and devotions? Above all, what is Christ's relation to your sin and your goodness? The Spirit convinces the world that Christ was righteous because He is a Spirit that comes from the Father, because He comes from Christ who is there, from Christ who on leaving earth finished righteousness, perfected judgment, set up the kingdom, and went to the Father and not to the devil, as He must have done if, with all His arrogant claims, He was not the very Christ and righteousness of God.

Verse 11—"*Of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged.*" *Has been;* that correction of a tense affects the whole complexion of our Christianity. The world-spirit was gathered into one head, and that head

was crushed in a final crisis and absolute judgment by Christ. So far was the death of Christ from having its chief effect on man that it acted primarily in the spiritual world. And there it acted not solely on God, but on the power of evil gathered and personalised.

The nerve and marrow of sin was the rejection of Christ, because He was the nerve and marrow of the righteousness of God. To all appearance it was evil that prevailed, and sin was master of the field. But the Spirit's work is to convince the world of the very opposite. It is to confound common sense by the grandest paradox. It reverses the verdict of mere history and mere opinion. It upsets what would have been the judgment of every newspaper published the day after the Crucifixion, and every historian from Josephus to Tacitus. In the judgment passed on Christ it was the judges that were judged, whether Jew or Greek. There are victories that are defeats. In the victory of sin, sin received its deathblow. Sin left its sting in Christ, but it cost sin its life.

In the triumph of the world over Christ the spiritual principle of the world was tried, judged, condemned, and, in principle slain. The absolute ultimate judgment of the world

took place in Christ's death. There God spoke His last word—His last endless word. The last moral reality is there, the last standard, the last judgment. The last judgment is behind us. The true judgment-seat of Christ, where we must all appear, is the Cross. I would speak of these two things—moral reality and final judgment.

III

To this end let me now take some words of the text for special emphasis.

1. The word "*convince*" is as misleading a translation as the word "comforter." The proper word is "convict." And conviction is neither a magical work nor a logical, it is moral; it is to carry home to the world moral reality. And there is only one way to do that—by an act of judgment which both lays bare our moral case and reveals God's moral passion to save. God's judgment of the world in Christ is the greatest religious act ever done in history. It is a moral conviction that is to be produced, no doubt, but it cannot be adequately produced by ethical means alone—only by spiritual. It comes, not by the progress of any moral order, but by the action

of Christ's Holy Ghost; by the morality, not of heroic insight, but of penitent faith and power.

The spread of a Christianity mainly ethical plays into the hands of Rome. It is the substitution of a law for a gospel. The attempt to define Christianity by the Sermon on the Mount is a mistake of this kind. It is what misleads men like Tolstoi and the great number of high-minded young people who are reading Tolstoi as if he were a new revelation and not an outgrown phase like Francis, or any other mediæval saint or ascetic. Much, indeed, can be done by the appeal to the natural conscience. I will not deny an original righteousness as well as original sin. Much has been done by the response of our original righteousness to the good and the just. Great grace be on our ethical teachers and prophets! But the greatest work cannot be done so. The Lord's controversy is above the purest human bar. To appeal to our natural integrity in the plea of God against the whole world is to take a Crown case to a County Court. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, the supernatural Cross. It is beyond the jurisdiction of the natural conscience. Nay, to appeal to the natural

conscience is to appeal to the judge to give the case against himself. It is just the natural conscience against which a conviction is asked. The natural conscience is not enough for the last moral crisis of the world. The last moral crisis is just produced by its failure. Natural goodness is not good enough to cope with the evil that is in its own world. It can be heroic and fine, but it is a heroism that ebbs with the ages if it is left to itself and tried on a historic scale. The natural conscience shares the rest of Nature's mortal fate; it has not life in itself. The need of Redemption just consists in the impotence of the conscience, its plague and its pain. It is too dead to save itself, too living not to feel dead. The final moral conviction cannot be brought about by the conscience alone, but by God's Spirit in the conscience. There is no repentance so precious as the repentance of the good and holy. None are so deeply forgiven as those who never forgive themselves. It is with such that the work of the Spirit lies. It is not the work of the ethical stalwarts, nor of Nature's noblemen, but of the humbled apostles and monuments of grace. It is not the victory of the chivalry of righteousness, but of the warriors of the Holy Ghost. This

kingdom comes only by the Cross. It is established only by the act of saving judgment there. The gospel is the one compendious condition of the world's moral renovation. Without atonement there is no justice done to the moral order. Salvation, if it means anything real, means a new heart; and the new heart is not simply a new affection, but a new relation, a new man, the conscience forgiven, recreated, and reassured before God by the atoning, reconciling act of God. That is real religion, real faith. That is what gives the great accent of reality. It does not mean being true to our convictions; it means that our convictions be true to the conviction and conversion of the conscience by the Holy Spirit, true to the central moral reality of the Cross, true to the new world set up by God's condemnation of the old world there.

Moral reality! there is nothing that so much needs to be restored to religion for its power over society as the note of reality. We want sincerity, but we want much more. We want a religion in which the man is not only honest, but founded on what makes the issue and the honesty of all the world and all eternity. If conscience were true to reality, it would be more easy to be true to conscience.

And what is this rock reality of things? It is not the moral order of the world, but the will and grace of God within the moral order, vindicating it, and working out by judgment and sacrifice the moral restoration of the world. Do not accuse me of philosophising when I speak of the last moral reality. If that be a thought foreign to our faith, we need go no farther to find why our faith is weak, and society is escaping from it. We are not simple when we resent such speech, but slaves of simplicity—we are victims of the obvious.

It is the bane of much current religion that it has been divorced from reality and soaked in sentiment and fancy. We are debauched by pathetic fallacies. The object of faith has been detached from the active forces of life and the world. By some dislocation God in the Cross does not coincide with the chief moral action and issue of the age. Religion has become an irrelevancy and an impertinence to much of the world's most vigorous and effectual life. Nay, much of the best conscience of the world is in the service of a realism which suspects or rejects Christian teaching. Is it fiction or preaching that is doing more to-day to mould and guide life? And is the ethic of fiction the evangelical ethic? What is the value of the Church's opinion to

the men who shape public affairs? What do they care for its moral verdict except as votes? The world has the impression that Ibsen is a moral realist and the Church is not. It thinks the Church, especially on its Protestant side, does not take seriously the malady it is always deploring, and does not deal radically, faithfully, and finally with it. In a word, it does not feel that the Church has the note of judgment. Whereas there is no moral realism like that of the New Testament—especially, for instance, St. John's Epistles. And it is the very work of the Spirit to lead us into all reality, even more than into all truth. Truth meant for the Apostles realities more than truths. We are not saved by believing truths, but by trusting ourselves to the reality of Christ's work upon the moral universe. We are not sanctified by seeing into truths, but by living upon Christ, the spiritual Rock. The reality of our soul meets the reality of the whole moral world in the atoning, redeeming action of Christ. *Is* it not in moral things that we find the real world? Is reality not a practical thing? It is not a quest of the philosophers chiefly. Realities are the realities of life, of its experience, of its needs, crises, destinies. What are real prayers? Not those that betray irrelevant fancy, fervid imagination, and a great

power of fluent pathos or of soaring wing—what is wrongly called a "gift in prayer"—but those that rise, with even a broken and a trailing wing, from the real situations, experiences, or emergencies of actual life. Realities are the realities of life. And is not life what conscience makes it? But not the heroic conscience. Ours is a guilty conscience. Surely then it is what saves the conscience from its guilt that makes real both the conscience and the world. The one reality for a sinful world is the reality of a Redeemer. The Church has gone astray in this matter; it has sought the Divine on metaphysical rather than moral lines; and it has lost in moral sagacity and efficiency. It has sought the great reality of the Incarnation in Christ's cradle rather than in Christ's cross. It has thought of the new righteousness as something miraculously infused into humanity rather than morally conquered for humanity. For St. Paul the Word was made flesh because He was made sin, but for the Church it was because He was made an infant. It has thought of the miracle of God's presence as a cosmic miracle of birth rather than as a moral miracle of grace, a miracle of holiness, conflict, death, judgment, and victory. It has sought the Divine in Christ's hypostatic

nature rather than in His conscience, and its atoning work for man's guilty conscience; and so its standard of reality has been perverted, unmoralised; and in moral things it has not for society the real note. But, even when we put the accent on the Cross, we may pronounce it wrong. We may shorten the saving Word. We may see but a partial Cross.

The decay of the sense of reality is caused by that decay in our moral sense which misses the note of judgment. Our convictions do not start from a sense that we are convicted. We want to be convinced by evidence where we should be convicted by the Spirit. This is an element that has dropped out of our view of the Cross, and therefore out of much Christian life; Christ crucified, we think, took the pain of sin but not its penalty, its sorrow but not its curse. We have of late done justice to the idea of sacrifice in connection with the Cross; but in the same proportion we have lost the idea of judgment. We have revived the ethical idea of the kingdom of God, but we have not grasped the idea, which fills both Old Testament and New Testament, that it could only be set up by a decisive act of holy judgment upon the kingdom of the world. The Cross was indeed the Divine

sacrifice, but sacrifice is not a final idea without judgment. It is not an end in itself, except to the ascetics—it is a means. But judgment is an end, it is final in its nature, because it is the actual vindication of holiness and the establishment of righteousness, and beyond holiness and its victory we cannot go. Our loss of moral reality is only another form of that loss of judgment which we also call the decay in the sense of sin. This decay is nothing less than the age's spiritual cowardice; it is the shirking of the actual moral situation of the world. Our whole judgment, our good sense, suffers from not judging ourselves. Moral realism means that a man, an age, a Church, should face its sin, and judge it and the ethical situation it creates. It means that an age should face it—the age's thought and its Church. But the Church is for the hour more engrossed with the arrears of attention it owes to human pain and misfortune. And it begins to lose the note of moral power, moral guidance, and actual authority. It cannot grapple with social sins, because it is habitually not at close quarters with sin, and its judgment, and its conquest. It is playing with young people and exercised about peccadillos, when it should be quelling spiritual wicked-

ness in high places. Nothing but the real and final victory over sin (which was its judgment in Christ) can give the power to handle public sins, to impress and direct the public conscience. It is more important to be sure we are forgiven than to be sure we are doing good. The art of pardon is greater than even the art to heal.

2. Then the prince of this world! Do you think of him as one who holds in his tyranny a world of victims who are miserable because they struggle in his yoke? That is not the conception here at all. He represents here all that is most congenial to the world's way. He is the personalised spirit of a willing and admiring world. He is the organ of a world proud of its representative. He has its confidence. He is the agent of methods which the world thinks essential to its prosperity and stability, which make its notion of eternal life. The world he represents has no idea that its moral methods can be bettered or its principles overthrown. To its mind the moral is an impertinence and the spiritual is a superstition—feeble, but capable of becoming dangerous. It must therefore be fought. And its antagonist is just as sensible of the antagonism. There is no compromise possible. They were destined to meet

in a struggle which is inevitable and a judgment which is final—and that meeting was in the Cross.

"The last judgment" is a phrase which we have almost robbed of its effect because we have used it chiefly for a remote and pictorial future. We have dwelt on the final *date* of judgment, and lost sense of a *state* of judgment, a judgment always there, and always final in its *nature*. We have pictured it in ways which have emptied it of spiritual awe, and reduced it to little more than physical terror and moral impotence. We do not realise that the prince of this world has been finally judged, and that we live in a saved world only because we live in a judged world. Either with the orthodox we have made judgment a cosmic catastrophe (and astronomy is full of them, and geology has made them too familiar), or we have reduced it, with the liberals, to the historic process on its ethical side, with its moral crises, and jail-deliveries, and fresh starts, from time to time. We have lost the note of judgment from the Cross, and so from our moral world. And we have lost it, with the orthodox, in a distant judgment scene, or with the liberals, who made it the mere nemesis of history, which is too slow and subtle to curb the pushing hour. "The

world's history is the world's judgment," says Schiller. He wished to recall the last judgment from its remoteness to be a power in the heart of present things and living conduct. But there is something more true than Schiller's famous phrase. It is not the world's history, but Christ's history that is the world's judgment. And especially is it Christ's Cross. The Cross, I keep saying, is God's final judgment on the world. It is the eternal moral measure of the world. There is no ethic but a Christian ethic. Christ is not Judge merely at some future coming. He is eternal Judge in His great work as the Crucified, a work historic yet timeless and final. In Him the prince of this world has been finally and effectually judged, and the absolute condemnation passed. Satan then fell from his heaven. The absolute and irreversible judgment was passed upon evil. There, too, the judgment of our sins fell once for all on the Holy One and the Just. The judgment Christ exercises stands on the judgment He endured. He assumes judgment because he absorbed it. Salvation and judgment are intertwined; they are not consecutive, in any moral faith. It is only by judgment that salvation could come; it was our judgment fallen on Christ that was our salvation; and it is this salvation that is

our worst judgment. True love always creates responsibility and sings of judgment. Our worst condemnation is not that we have sinned, but that we have refused to be saved from our sin. "He that believeth not is condemned already." When love forgets judgment love loses its solemnity, because its supreme word in Christ is separated from the idea of moral curse, moral passion, and moral expiation; and the final act of the love of God in the Cross becomes then but a kind and powerless tale, because the saving Cross is not also the one moral transaction of the world, the judgment of the whole sin of the world by God's jealous, unsparing holiness. There sacrifice rose to judgment, and judgment worked by sacrifice. When Christ loved me and ransomed me God gave Himself to His own holy law which I broke, and He took its judgment on my sin. The final judgment has been passed; God's utmost has been done; it is soaking into history and society. It is less coming than come. We walk with the Son of God in a consuming fire. Its action should colour all faith with a more godly fear, a more strenuous moral tone, and a more commanding word. All that is yet to come, with all its fearful expectation, is but the working out of that final and eternal

solemnity which transpired when in the Cross of Christ the prince of this world was judged, and cast into the outer darkness. Any judgment that may come at the end of time can only be the last stage of that same judgment in which all our faith begins. The work of the Spirit to-day is to restore this element to faith, to moralise faith by the judgment in the Cross, to evangelise ethics by the same means, and to replace the great white throne in our spiritual sky. It is to solemnise the happiness of piety, and to keep before us (though not always) the awful and constant price of our salvation. It is to awe the moral imagination no less than banish the sinner's fear. It is to produce in our faith reverence no less than affection, and majesty no less than trust. It is to rescue the idea of royalty from the vulgarity of courtiers and chroniclers, and restore us the Bible idea of a king as a judge who reigns in righteousness. It is to make speech of holiness as welcome as speech of love is now. It is to give the religious affections an ethical foundation and an eternal power. Much current religion has tenderness but not greatness, kindness but not atmosphere, and taste but not faith. It has not the air of the spiritual world, and therefore not its

authority. It touches us, but it does not quell us or rule us. It asks the preacher to move us, but not to confound us. It makes men generous oftener than it makes them humble. It moves individuals, but it does not lay a spell on society either of fear or love. It has warmth, but not spiritual penetration or searching grasp. It corrects our selfishness, but it does not destroy our egotism. We can be much too kind to human nature for the gospel it needs. Give George MacDonald a well-earned rest, and take up your Pascal. The gospel can be ineffective because it is not incisive enough, not unsparing enough, not real enough to face us, not deep enough to trawl the foul bed of the soul. It may lack the conquering note of passion, the last trump of judgment, conviction, and glorious fear. We may not realise that the sin from which we are saved is a thing most damnable, and we may forget that, by the judgment of God's holy love on our Redeemer, it is not only subdued, but (I speak with awe) it *is* damned—for ever.

Is this theology? Then theology it must be. It only means that it is upon some kind of a theology that a Church must live. An individual may get on with mere religion, but a Church must have dogma. Our Congregational

Union is not a Church, but a chief source of its present difficulty is this, that the independency of the Churches is at once unqualified and unkindled by that common grasp of (even a revised) dogma which gave our fathers a base for so much individual liberty. According to such faith it will be unto us. I speak of *us* in our collective work and Free Church witness. If our faith lack something central to the Cross, our bearing in the world cannot but lack what overcomes the world and insures our place and dignity. The Cross is (1) the holy act of grace and revelation through Christ to us; (2) the act of judgment on Christ for the world; (3) the act of judgment by Christ on the world; so that the judgment He bore becomes the judgment He wields. To lose one of these is to maim the gospel and reduce its effect. Without the note of judgment in the Cross the Church loses the note of moral realism in its faith, and the skill of moral insight and moral remedy for the world. It will make a great practical difference whether the sacrifice we find in the Cross is only a revelation of God's heart or also the exercise of His holy doom. It is this last that is dropping from sight and use to-day; and there goes with it our Church power and our moral weight. The moral task of

the Christian life in the face of evil is set not by love, but by love in judgment. And our inspiration is not a love that shall judge the world, but one that has judged it, and made our tenderest message both solemn and sure. What is the Church but the great apostle and preacher on earth? And what is preaching but speaking with authority? And what is authority if it do not carry behind its claim this word of judgment, and create a new and sure responsibility for those who hear? It is no authority which demands what it does not enforce. And for a Church authority does not exist except her word is of a Christ who judges because He was judged. The Churches which hold to that faith, however they may misconceive it, are the Churches which have, and will have, authority. Authority always goes with the power and commandment effectually to forgive, which cannot be without the judgment note.

We of the Free Churches at least have nothing but the authority of this faith to stand upon for our public place. We have no right to our schism and our Church freedom except what is created by the kind of direct forgiveness that gave us our soul's freedom. If this faith suffer our ground gives way. And our

faith must suffer—that is my plea—if our love be not formed on grace and made effective by judgment, and if judgment be not established once and for all in the death of Christ. That is the Church's one foundation. I fear we have in many cases lost the sense of a Church. Some of our Churches are but gatherings; or they are Churches of mere moderates that would never have led to the Church being called holy, or its spirit either. And I ask myself if this be a symptom of having lost or lamed that element of forgiving judgment in the Cross which created the Church and is its evangelical foundation always. It is just the frame of mind that would prevail in a Church with only one foot on the rock. Some restless Churches evidently do not stand on it; their efforts are but balancing. The Church arose out of the fact that Christ died for our sins and rose for our justification. He died because we had sinned, and rose again because He had justified us, and judged the world in its Prince. We are suffering from an undogmatic Christianity, especially as to the Cross, which is not apostolic faith, and will not carry an apostolic Church. No half-gospel will really affect the age. The age will like it because it interests the age—and lets it alone. We are

in danger of moving the centre of gravity to Christ's life and teaching—as if we believed Christ for His doctrine instead of His doctrine for Christ—as if the Gospels were the brief history of His soul instead of the long history of His passion. There is some risk of an affectation of thought in this; and the effect of unreality from it in our Churches is sure, subtle, and fatal; and it is just what some of our Churches show. It was the atoning death of Christ that founded the Church; it was no ordinance of His life, or injunction of His teaching. We have no account of His founding a Church by any precept or programme. The only established Church is the Church inevitably established by the free-will offering of Christ on the Cross as a redemption from curse and a judgment of sin in the flesh. The Church's one foundation is Christ crucified, and risen, and bringing forth judgment unto love's victory. To lose that element in faith is to dissolve any Church in due time.

Let us keep in our faith, at any cost to popularity, the virile note, the ethical note, the tragic note, the trump of doom, and the note of power. Let us add to our sympathy and benevolence the deeper sense of sin, sanctity, and judgment. These are not theo-

logical but religious ideas, and they must come to their own in our current piety. It is not a revised theology we need, so much as a renewed faith, renewed not in its fervour so much as in the spirit of its mind. It is not a question of orthodox or liberal, nor one of individual piety. It is not the form or the fervour of belief that is involved, but a type of common faith and catholic godliness. It is not zeal, devotion, or energy that is lacking. We need a mode of piety tuned to the New Testament key and inspired from the real New Testament source. Our theologians may, and must, revise crude theories, which impede our message, about substitution, satisfaction, miracle, the Bible, or the wrath of God; but we have not the style and freedom to deal with these secondary theological questions till we are rooted in the one article of an experienced Redemption. The room that theology needs is not the liberty of science, but of salvation. It broadens by free grace more than by free thought. It is not really the theology of the Cross that makes it unwelcome. It is its sanctity, its judgment, and its demand—faith's personal exaction of a broken will. *Mitis depone collem.* It is not the mystery of the Cross that men stumble at, but its offence. It suffers not

from men's doubt, but from their resentment of claims which are all too clear. It is fatal to be shy of this side of the gospel, shy of the Cross which annuls the curse, and of the judgment note which deepens the word of grace. It is fruitless to try to heal the soul without lifting its load. We cannot solve its riddles while we ignore its guilt. The gospel comes to the world not as its solution but as its salvation. And it comes as its judgment before it comes as its balm. It is as ineffectual to preach pardon without expiation as it is to preach pagan theories of expiation. It is feckless to trust to Christian persuasions or pities which leave all parties dull to the terror of the Lord. There is a type of love that does not cast out fear because it never allowed it to come in. Its wisdom does not begin in fear. But the thought of judgment, come or coming, is both a comfort, a tonic, and a moral stay. The larger hope, for instance, is a Christian hope, but does it never enfeeble the solemnity both of grace and faith, and strip the awe from our joy and peace? May it not go with a type of religion which slackens our warfare, robs us of power, saps our Christian virility, and sinks us in the respect of the foes we have to confront? We cease to be feared when we

cease to fear, and when our faith knows no wrestling we lose the spirit of fight, and hang back in the Lord's controversy. And a like result flows from the doctrine of evolution.

There is no idea more dominant for recent years than that of evolution, and our preachers are much concerned often to place themselves in line with it. And very ably it is done. But there are many cases where the attempt only shows how they miss the gospel note. The congruity of evolution with Genesis is neither here nor there. It is a burnt-out question. But what is its moral and practical tendency? What is its effect on those who make it a dogma? I believe it is dangerous to the gospel of grace, conversion, and to that daily vigilance which keeps our obedience real and makes our election sure. Evolution becomes the unfolding of a Divine Immanence and not the coming of a Divine Redeemer. It bids us give free course to the highest that is in us, instead of being converted and turning to the Rock that is higher than we. It is attractive to the imagination and interesting for thought. But what the soul needs is nothing of the kind, else culture would be religion enough. The soul needs not a development from within, but a rescue from without; not the erasure of evil,

but its judgment. Salvation is not the soul's inspiration from its own rich depths, but its total obligation to grace most high. The soul needs, more than anything, one standing over it, measuring it, judging it, destroying its enemy and saving it for a new order of life. It needs an authority over it and in it, which no part (or even the whole) of an evolving system has any claim to wield over another part. And the popular unconscious effect of a spiritual atmosphere saturated with the idea of evolution is to rob us of authority because it impairs responsibility, weakens a sense of judgment, and nurses self-sufficiency, or reliance on a vague drift of things. It sets you in a Divine process instead of at a Divine bar. It makes peace with science, but it is fatal to duty, effort, seriousness, and reality of life. It saps the gospel power, strips the word of authority, empties life of its crucial decisions, and therefore lowers life. It makes the preacher teach truth more than grace, and state a case when he should plead a cause, make a demand, or beseech as though Christ besought. It turns apostles into scribes and makes the Church a school. And the world applauds because it is interested and—let alone.

These and such influences tend to turn us from a faith which is passionate through conflict, to a faith which is amiably at home and at peace with its world. We are not in the least pilgrims and sojourners. We cease to wrestle and we unlearn much of the power to pray. And if we know too little of such prayer the loss is reflected in our loss of respect from man, even from our foes.

In England, for instance, we have received an assault for which we were quite unprepared; and we are just rallying from the blow. I refer, of course, to the Education Bill (1902). What is it in us that has made such an assault possible? How came they to dare it? What has made our enemy think it could be risked, with half the worshippers in the land on our rolls? Have we lost something which should have arrested such wickedness in a sister Church and saved her from such an iniquity were it so as by fear?

Brethren, if the note of battle and judgment go out of our faith the stroke of judgment must sting our experience. Let us not despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint in this rebuke. Of course we shall not faint. Of course we *shall not submit* to a wrong inflicted by the prince of this world. But equally of course I

hope we shall examine ourselves at God's bar, as on the eve of the battle good men do. Is this calamity also nemesis? Have we somewhere forsaken the Lord and lamed the Cross? While we cherished His pity have we come short of His grace? I speak of our type of faith, not of individual piety. Have we ignored His judgment as we dwelt on His love? Are we afraid, if we preach the judgment in the Cross, of scaring men? Does His reproof now break any hearts, or His cause make enough martyrs? Have we lost the Lord of Hosts in a mild Prince of Peace? Have we declined on an easy salvation and neglected the Lord's controversy? We are "scarcely saved"; have we felt lightly saved and taken our mercy as a thing of course? And is it therefore that we are given into the enemy's hands, slack and asleep? I hope this judgment will come with the sound of a trump. I hope it will stir and gather us, and brace and harden us; I hope it will rouse us to make inquisition far beyond this one conflict. We can make it the greatest blessing all round. I hope it may do something to restore to our religion that breath of battle which blows from the depths of the Cross, that power, seriousness, and dignity which are so easily lost in an age of sentiment and sympathy.

We can die of dignity I know. But the Saviour died *for* a dignity and *with* a dignity He never lost. There is no doubt we can fight; can we cultivate a faith which fights for us and is a fire before us to compel respect and distance?

Thank God that we have come to a more kindly and helpful age; but heart will never do the work of conscience, nor benevolence of principle. A general charity is not the love of Christ. A minimum creed is not the condition of Christian unity. To be undenominational is to be futile. And to have no particular Church is only to become the prey of those who have nothing but a Church. Why is the open heart so often justice-blind? Is it because it is opened genially by nature and not solemnly by the judgment Cross? Is it also because an evil system perverts a good will? There is no Divine charity but gives justice its due. That is true for faith and true for practice. It is the principle of the Cross and the principle of the State. The gospel is not peace and goodwill among men, but peace among men of good will. And the human charities grow in the clefts of God's gracious judgments, which are like great mountains. It might be to the good of the kingdom of God if our charity toward men had to stand still a

little, while we regain that justice which springs from the justice of God. Were there more justice we should need less charity, and less of what apes charity. Have we escaped from the severity of the theologians only to succumb to the spell of the philosopher and the philanthropist? It is a poor exchange. Have we lost concern for principle because we want peace or subscriptions? That is ill well-doing. There is no guarantee in the mere spirit of charity that God shall be our glory and righteousness our pride. There is no security that wrong shall not be done, freedom lost, and the holy war die down. Charity can buy votes for a pet iniquity; and the plea for it can become a courteous affectation in men whose convictions are easy for lack of moral understanding. The *Church Times* says, "Dissenters can never have the stamp of the gentleman because they cannot by their principles be other than censorious." So! the toad must not say to the harrow, "I have no need of thee." We are all taught of God that the love which keeps Israel is a judgment that neither slumbers nor sleeps till it have brought forth righteousness unto truth. There is no safety in a sentimental or churchly piety against those subtle and plausible abuses which need sanctity to discern their unholy drift and faith

to storm their hoary walls. Have we that sense of Christ which gives us a true instinct of the real Anti-christ, a true courage in its face, and a true method to meet it? Has our faith in Christ lost belief in a prince of this world, dying, but desperate and dangerous?

Are the critics just who ask if our public word has still its ancient power? Does every form of denunciation we use increase the real weight of our moral rebuke? On the other hand, does religion with us tend at all to a subdued and affable type which is feeble in public effect, and may be fatal to our public work and principle? There is a brotherliness and liberality which does nothing but give an opening to the resolute enemy. The charm of Christ can be made to veil the offence of the Cross. The winsome Son of Man may hide the Christ who was made at once a curse for us and Judge of all the earth. The pulpit poet serves us ill if he ousts the apostle. What shall it profit us to crown our Petrarch with bays while Savonarola's soul goes out in fire? Has the doctrine of the living Christ never obscured the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, or quenched the tongue of fire? Does the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, on the other hand, never lose itself in the sand of subjective sinlessness at

the cost of public righteousness and historic judgment?

In politics it is often asked, What is really wrong with us? What, for instance, is wrong with the party for which our principles have done so much more than it does for our principles? Distinguished writers like Mr. Kidd lament the degradation of the principles of modern Liberalism by its separation from ethical and religious inspiration. Can it *be* lack of faith, of positive religion, that is the matter? I am not sure that the other party has not for the moment a religious earnestness which ours has not. At least it has the support, not to say guidance, of men who are in frank and deadly earnest about their religion, such as it is, and who understand it, and put no other issue in competition with it.

Mr. Gladstone did not like Nonconformity. But he understood it. Have we now men leading our own side of politics who do not understand our case, who do not care to understand it, and at heart regard us as diplomatists regard missionaries, as troublesome zealots? It need not be strange that they should. If they do not hear the music we hear, the dance we lead them must seem absurd. But we have a holier word than the State, and a holier trust than even

education. We are at one with the High Churchman in that, if we know ourselves. We have a trust more sacred than either the nation or the child, more than culture or freedom. If we know it, we have that which emancipates those whom freedom cannot release. We have the free gospel and the kind of Church that a free gospel makes. That means more for human liberty than any party programme or public cry. I confess that nothing would justify our course at present, or the extremer course we may be driven to, but an attack by the State upon our Church. It is for us an attack by the prince of this world on the principle of the Cross which formed the Church, the prerogative of Christ of which, for this land, we are trustees. Every attempt to establish the Church saps the Cross. You will never establish the Cross without disestablishing the Church. I am cautious about politics in preaching. But when it comes to this I do not hesitate. This is a political issue which involves the Church's pulpits. The spirit that would capture our schools would close our pulpits, as it denies our Church. But with many of us conscience has gone sleepy, through enlargement of the heart. We want to be friendly all round. We fumble with an unsectarian Christianity doomed to be sterile.

We forget that we are an apostolic Church, and that for an apostle the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Multitudes of the good care nothing for principles compared with pieties, schemes, funds, and numbers. They are not interested in freedom, but in conventional philanthropies. Recently I read a complaint from a large County Union that they were not getting the young into the Churches, and that, too, while the Churches were going to unheard-of lengths in providing cricket, football, draughts and dominoes, dancing classes, and pierrot troupes. I agree with the protests made on the occasion, and should say that that was just the way not to fill churches, except with burdens. Speak to a suburban Church, for instance, about the nature of the Free Church or its ministry as founded in the principle of the gospel, and you are met by mute bewilderment. There was nothing touching in the address, forsooth! These people live on religious tea. Do we live under a sense of judgment? Have we any self-examination of a stern kind? Do we not abound in religious people without a soul-history, whose spiritual world at sixty is much what it was at twenty, if it continues to exist. Be sure that no sympathy, benevolence, or altruism will make good what we must lose in

renouncing the advantage of organisation. Only a faith can which goes so deep into its own moral source as to link us with the last authority of the real world. Are we indeed making men as we claim our creed does? Let us be plain about this. No man of sense or sympathy will accuse me of heartlessness. But if they can they must. I would not arrest a single gift, lame a single kind effort, or discourage a single sacrifice. But, my dear brethren, brotherliness is not the gospel it has come to be called. Kindness, sacrifice, and doing good are not Christianity. They are of it, but they are not it. And it is healthier on the whole to be asking, "What must I do to be saved?" than "Do I love and help Jesus?" Well-doing is an expression of the Church, but evangelical faith is the Church's life. Has our well-doing outrun the vital faith which carries it?

If I am not wrong the source of our difficulty is deeper than the mere critic can diagnose. If I were only a critic I should not see it. Our political situation is but one symptom of a state of things which needs more than remedy. It needs something in the nature of revival, and perhaps regeneration. I am not speaking of anything, I repeat, so much as of Churches. I am speaking, under great qualifications, of the

religious mind and frame of our Churches. I am comparing it with the New Testament type. Are there not too many who both lightly feel and lightly heal our wound? Are there enough who are taught by the unsparing Cross to speak the piercing word and press the searching spirit? Religion can do too much to deepen the self-complacency which is so natural to man and so national to the Englishman. We may be hardened by the Church as we are not by the world, and lulled into a self-satisfaction which becomes too tough at last for the very sword of God. The suggestions made by some at the present crisis do but scratch the soil that needs ploughing deep. It is only spasmodic to urge a new vigour in the Liberationist cause. Vigour for such work does not come at command. It has to be deep planted, well watered, and long reared. If we are slack, then, it is not our mood alone that is at fault, but our morale. Our religion is in danger of following a type which lays no Church principle of necessity upon us. It is too easily happy with either a free Church or a bond, if only the current forms of good are done, or some vicious wrong set right. We are reminded that we have invited this attack on our principles because we have been too quiescent. But why have we been so? Because

our type of faith has encouraged it. Because our Church position is not religious enough; it is not a direct part and implicate of our faith; it is too political to be preached about (and it should be preached); because we are not compelled to be Free Churchmen by what makes us Christians; because our Free Church is not rooted in what frees our soul. A relaxed sense of the cost of our soul's freedom to Christ must mean a reduced sense of the value of freedom in the Church and a slacker duty in its service. We are in danger of losing in trivial well-doing —some Churches have quite lost it—the mass and range of Puritan conviction, and the verve and volume of New Testament faith.

Nothing gives some of us more concern than the position of our Missions — the Colonial Society and especially the London Missionary Society. It attracts serious notice even abroad. I find in one of the most recent and able foreign books on Missions puzzled reference to the prolonged embarrassment and depression of the Congregational Society and a regretful contrast with its great past. The recent appeal of its Treasurer for plain speaking from the Churches has produced in the *Examiner* a correspondence which has been, with few exceptions, so slight and superficial as only to increase the uneasi-

ness, and furnish another index of the frame of mind at the root of the mischief. It evinced no real insight into the larger and deeper situation and no grasp of the spiritual case. We are more alive to our ills than to their source. We feel the bullets but we do not see the foe. We are well served with prophets and ideals. I wish we had more of those who could translate them into schemes. How is it we have not reared, attracted, or kept such men? But our need is something beyond either ideas or schemes. The state of our missionary zeal is always a true index of the New Testament quality of our faith. For the New Testament is the great missionary manual more than it is anything else. Nothing will set our Missions right which does not set right much besides. What would put the Missionary Society on its feet would solve the problem of the Congregational Union and our colleges. The trouble is in the Churches, and their type of faith, and its order of attraction. Is our creed growing and keeping men? Is it producing intellectual and moral fibre? Is Congregationalism capable of missionary work, of extension work? Did our missionary inspiration cease with the doctrine of an endless hell for the heathen? When that went did it carry with it all we found in a

doctrine of judgment? Was it only a judgment for the inferior races? Is it not a worse judgment not to preach the gospel than never to have heard it? How is it that we are not compelled to missionise if only to deliver our own souls?

Is it not new grasp of the moral reality of the Cross that we need? We feel too much below our work. I am not sure that we seize the problem. We do not rise to the great hour's most spiritual call. Is it not apostles we need first and most? Not merely the apostles who can make attractive sermons, but those that are palpably made, in spite of themselves, by the gospel, who can fill us with more sense of God's grace than of human wrongs or needs. Not merely men with apostolic fervour, the taste for sanctity, and human feeling. That is too subjective. And we have such men. But men with an apostolic gospel, which is objective, which *is* the power and *makes* the power—and the kind of power we need—men to force us anew, not upon the Cross merely, but upon that in the Cross which harrows hell, strikes at Satan's seat, deals with final moral reality, settles for good the whole human case, and breaks up at once the prince of the world and the fountains of our

soul's great deep. We feel the sentiment of the gospel freely; I wish we felt as fully the eternal judgment in it which makes it Divine grace. Back to Christ is what we need. Yes, but to the whole New Testament Christ and the whole New Testament Cross. We believe in that gospel, but have we its own freedom in handling it? Has it become central to our creed without being central to our religion and our practice? Has our actual piety lost the scriptural compass, perspective, and proportion? Do we take the gospel for granted and pass on? We keep it in lavender, perhaps. We have it in reserve, perhaps, but we do not call it up. Some are preoccupied with outpost work. They are scattered in skirmishes. Our little Societies drain the interest from our Churches. Our forces are too spread and wasted with excursions and alarms. There is danger of losing the gospel amid its applications and *aperçus*. It is time to call out our spiritual reserves and work our crucial texts. The hour is critical with us. We must draw upon the great war fund—if we have still among us an authority that can open the chest, if we have a prophet with a rod to strike the rock. Let the true gospel accumulate in our moral experience and it will break its own way out into applications.

Is our faith a passion? Nothing is so ingenious and fertile in schemes as a ruling passion. It is both wisdom and power. For faith works itself out in love; but love does not always work by faith. Faith fed at the true Cross works out into love, but there is a love that carries us away from the Cross. There is a pity that blinds us to the work done there, and to the judgment that goes out from it in the power of the Holy Ghost. If we resumed our private use of the Bible we should soon find whether we had lost its perspective and its tone. Were the awful fulness of the Cross the reality to us that it is to Christ His power would be ours. Nay, were it to us Protestants the near and intimate concern that the Pope is to the Romanists, or even their Church to Anglicans, nothing could resist us and few things annoy.

Let us think less of revising the Cross, and give it its way to revise us. I doubt if increased prayer is a sufficient remedy. We seem to need a gospel that stirs prayer, and puts urgency and prevalence into it, and is over us always as a shaping power of responsibility, inspiration, and rebuke. We need to dwell longer and deeper on what God has done, borne, and given in the crisis of the Cross. We need for life's leading power a personal piety which is continually

schooled there, humbled and tempered to the peace which comes by war and the righteousness which is by judgment. The zeal of principle, the thirst of righteousness, and the passion of holiness can only live by a faith which finds in the Cross the focus of moral reality, the holiness of God grappling in final judgment with the last reality of man's moral case. God's love to us is not distinguished by this, that He first loved us, loves us tenderly, and loves us to the last. Were it no more than that it might be as ineffectual as so much of our true love is. Herein is love, not that God loved us but that His love measured the moral need and loved us unto atonement. Why do we break away in the middle of that verse? Love to a sinful world is not holy without atonement. And what is atonement if it be no more than sacrifice? How shall we know that it is effectual sacrifice, that it is not the blind and wasted force which the sacrifices of so many loving people are? The power of the Atonement is that it is sacrifice relevant to sin, God's own sacrifice to His own holiness, God's own endurance of His own judgment, and His destruction of His last enemy. Neither love nor sacrifice is enough for the powers we need unless it meet and glorify God's holy judgment.

To be joined with that is repentance, and to triumph in that is faith, and its reign is the kingdom of God. For our renewal of power we need a renewal of faith in the Cross as the act and centre of judgment, the fountain of grace, the foundation of the Church, the conscience of conscience, the life of ethic, and the secret and method of the social future.

Throughout the Bible the kingdom of God is not an achievement of man but a gift of God. It is not a community apart like the Church; it is a state of society. It is not a special society that men form, nor a social programme they frame, but an authority, a kingship, that God hath set up—really set up, and not merely published. There is another Bible principle, even in the Old Testament, that the kingdom could only be set up by an act of judgment—not by mere proclamation, but by effectual vindication. Well, it is set up, by God's grace, in the judgment death of Christ. That is our gospel. It is not the kingdom we have first to preach and scheme for. No preaching or device of ours can set the kingdom up. It is not set up; it comes down—out of heaven from God. It is not reform, it is salvation. What we have to preach first and keep first is something that God has done, not that we may do. When we preach that gospel

with its native power it will produce in us its own effect, and compel us to show forth the kingdom that faith and repentance have made within. If we see to the gospel the gospel will see to the kingdom.

I cannot tell you the rest, the comfort, and the power of that faith in a day like this. To realise that we have not to set up the kingdom but to take home God's own establishment of it, is to escape from the burden, not only of an Established Church, but of a world far too heavy for our best efforts to raise. We are distracted by the many schemes for good, which are sometimes the devices of despair rather than the fruit of faith. We are disheartened at the failure of the partial panaceas that appear like false messiahs and draw after them so many. We are weary of the slow coming of a better time, and the rectification of all things. What peace and power it is then to realise that the prince of this world is judged already, that the Lord our Redeemer reigneth, that the kingship of God is already fixed in its everlasting seat. The Cross is that judgment throne; its victory is our sphere; and the grace of it is our gospel and our charge. For the supreme sake of the kingdom of God let us pay more attention to the gospel than to the kingdom. It is through

the Church of the judged and saved that the kingdom comes. Let the kingdom be what the true Church makes it. But let the Church be what the gospel makes it rather than what our dreams of a millennium seem to require. The gospel is *our* business, the kingdom is the Lord's. We thought we were charged with both, and it is more than we can bear. It is the gospel that is put into our hands. "Go, preach it to every creature." We were not charged with the kingdom. Ours is the gospel, the Spirit, the Church, but His is the kingdom, the power and glory for ever. I rejoice that the air is full of the kingdom. It means now, as when Christ came, that the King is not far off. If we feel the kingdom is at hand, it is because the King is preaching it. And the more we feel the spirit of the kingdom, the more we shall be made to feel how necessary to bring it in the King is whose judgment set it up.

It is a time of immense peril, therefore it is for faith a time of endless promise and hope. A time of purgation, perhaps, but a time of endless promise and of hope in the Lord.

SOME CAUSES OF MISSIONARY APATHY

SOME CAUSES OF MISSIONARY APATHY

ON many sides the societies complain that the Christian public does not support missionary work as it deserves. The heroic missionary ardour has paled in the public imagination, and something like a system of moral coercion is too necessary to flog up the enthusiasm and bring in the supplies. I do not say the societies are wrong in this, but something is wrong somewhere. And one is the more disposed to criticise from the feeling that an idea so grand, so captivating, as the missionary idea, is calculated, if set forth in its intrinsic worth, to kindle men of itself, and wake them to that readiness of support never denied to a cause which touches the public imagination and conscience combined.

Nor can I help when I listen to rebukes which reproach the Churches with not prizing their Christ enough because the missionary societies lack support—I cannot help in such cases feeling that perhaps it is not rebuke, however gentle,

that is the main thing required. Rebuke is a weapon to be very sparingly used, the more that it is so ready to offer itself. It were better in dealing with reasonable and Christian people to consider the situation and if possible discover the causes which lead to the result deplored. It may be found then either that the causes are removable, or that they disclose a state of things not wholly lamentable from the largest Christian point of view, however unfavourable to the particular agencies at any particular time at work in Christ's name. I think, too, that, in pleading for missionary support as I am, it is both wise and respectful to take the public into confidence, to be perfectly frank as to the situation, to avoid the air of coaxing, and the suspicion of withholding the seamy side from view. It is far better to admit weakness, and invite help to resist it, than to produce an impression of lack of candour. I would not be an advocate but a physician. The case has more to gain from an honest diagnosis than from diplomatic reserves.

Let us, then, first recognise the comparative apathy of even the Christian public in the matter of missions, and let me suggest what seem to me to be among its causes. I do not say they are justifications, only causes which

our judgment must weigh as they deserve, and remove where possible.

I

First of all, there is the dislike of the public at large, and especially of the monied public, for religion which is very much in earnest. Your confessed man of the world hates a man who is just as distinctly not of this world, and who is aggressively so. The modern paganism, like the old, resents the intrusion of Christ upon its self-indulgent life. And the man of very superior culture, whose faith in civilisation amounts to a superstition fascinating to all lovers of irony, such a man despises, as the old pagan *élite* used to do, an agency that is so potent with the popular heart as Christianity, and so revolutionary in some of its results. Your merely commercial man, again, resents any influence which rouses in those he calls the "niggers" a self-respect and intelligence which make it more difficult for him to use them and then turn them adrift. A great mass of people in this Christian country are totally unaffected in their conscious life by Christianity. It has affected only their unconscious and inherited habits, and the usages of a society which they

indolently worship. But they are at heart quite alien to the specific personal influence of Christianity, which alienation is always ready to break into open contempt and hostility. What is known as the forward policy, the military party in the State, has sometimes a deep aversion to the missionaries, who suffer more than most from it, and who raise, as in the case of Colenso, the chief protest against it.

II

Secondly, the unparalleled anarchy of opinion in the general public on religious matters is a powerful cause of declining missionary zeal. The great missionary age of the Church was when Europe had the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome, as yet unenriched by the splendid variety of modern life and thought, but also unweakened in the force of its blows on any particular point it might select. It is easy to see how this distraught condition of the public mind in the matter of belief should affect the ardour of Christian effort, and stop the supply of the best men for missionary work. The educated are unsettled. The societies complain that they are forced to take a low quality of missionary far oftener than they

wish, just because there is so little range of choice, and they must take inferior men or none. You will remember, too, that last century, which saw the origin of the great Protestant missionary societies, was an age of great uniformity of belief. The Calvinistic creed of those bodies where missions arose was a unity, whose seamless robe was hardly rent by any of the questions rained upon it since from the mitrailleuse of this century's thought. Even among the religious, the present age is an age rather of mild breadth than of the intensity needed to keep distant missions alive. This leads to our third point.

III

There has taken place a great change in Christianity itself. Not only is the world outside in a state of religious anarchy, but Christian belief is in a state of transition. We are crossing a stream about whose bottom we are not always quite sure, and whose force is prodigious. We have too much ado to keep our own seat in the saddle, and our own steed on his feet, to be as free as we should like to give thought and help to others. This is a temporary state of things, but when it passes missionary effort will rest on

a somewhat different basis from that on which it rested when it began. We have lost, for example, that sure faith which made the great missionaries of last century, and indeed, of the early and mediæval and Romish Church, so earnest and so powerful, that sure faith in a decisive choice and in an endless hell. Even when that future is not denied it is not held or asserted with the same passionate fervour as once. And especially it is impossible to believe that eternal burnings are reserved for the heathen who have never heard the gospel. We must go out now, not so much to pluck brands from hell fire, but, in the name of love and progress, to bestow on the dark races a gift higher and nobler than any creed of theirs—the gift of Christ and His love. We do not say they will be damned if they do not believe, but we do say they will be blessed if they do. If they do not believe, much of the condemnation will be ours.

Again, we have learned to regard their religions differently. They have a certain divine and even revelationary value. Our instructed missionaries do not attack the pagan religions (like the first Christians and the first missionaries) as inventions of the devil. It will be a long time before missions recover from

that most lamentable and ignorant policy, which marred and discounted the work of some classic missionary names. The science of comparative religion has given us new light on pagan religions. And a more catholic Christianity has recognised the light there as light from heaven. It views the pagan heroes and saviours as minor epiphanies of our own supreme and comprehensive Christ. But this is a tendency which runs to an absurd extreme when thin-minded people say that the pagan religions are quite good enough for the pagan peoples, because they are their own. Do the pagan peoples find it so? Or would the clothes in which these critics were born be good enough for them throughout their life? The coat of one's own skin is an exquisite garment and one that fits well; why should we consent to wear another, or be indebted to the meddlesomeness of those seniors of ours who prescribe upper garments, and even deny themselves much to provide and adorn them?

Again, missionary work has come to be much more than it was a matter of education and less a matter of conversion. And we do not readily believe in education. It is always easier to rouse public enthusiasm of the tumultuous sort by the violent methods than by the slow,

steady, and abiding order of work. It has, however, been forced on missionaries themselves, both by their experience and by the change in our view of Christianity, that educational methods are in certain circumstances of as much value as the more striking, but really more precarious, means of sudden and decided conversion. But they show less.

But educational methods are not peculiar to the Church only. It is a kind of work in which the State has a great, and will ever have a greater, share as distinct from the Church. And this leads me to the fourth explanation of missionary apathy.

IV

Slowly the Church and the societies have been losing their monopoly of Christian effort, and the function of the State in contact with inferior races has become more and more missionary. Christianity has reared a civilisation so far Christian, and direct missions have become but one form of our missionary agency and spirit. Christianity has had two great sides — the religious and the moral. And there are two great agencies for its spread, the Christian Church and the Christian State. This may be

said by the most convinced Dissenter. In India especially the action of the Christian State is becoming more and more missionary. We hold India for India's sake, in the name of justice and benevolence. It is one of the most splendid triumphs of Christianity in the world—a race redeeming a race. It is one of the grandest replies you can make to one who asks, What is to become of England's Christian influence and character when the Church is disestablished? The blessed influence of England on India has been quite apart from the work of the Church as established. Indeed, one of the great drawbacks to the influence of Christianity in India is the existence of that same Church there, forced on a conquered people who are obliged to support the officials of an alien faith.

Society, I say, apart from Church organisation, has become more missionary in its sense of responsibility. It is a triumph of the Christian missionary spirit, and I welcome and claim it in that name. I would not be guilty of the unfairness of saying that a man whose sympathies led him to this form of missionary action rather than the other was a man devoid of the missionary ardour of Christianity. Let each man select such mission field as is most congenial—social or religious, indirect or direct; notwithstanding

in every way Christ is preached, and in that I rejoice and will rejoice. The whole changing spirit of our English feeling to inferior races is a victory of the New Testament over the Old Testament, of the missionary spirit over the spirit of extermination on the one hand and of proselytism on the other. And the temporary withdrawal of enthusiasm from the missionary societies has partly gone to make us more than ever before a missionary nation. In several departments we find that religious energy is reduced not by its decay but by its deflection to social channels. And it is so far well. For with our tremendous foreign relations, if we are not missionary we are not Christian. If we are not missionary in our politics (in the sense I have named) we are not Christian in our heart and faith.

And this leads me to mention a fifth cause of declining interest in missions.

V

Some of the Churches have been too ready to welcome and utilise the work of the sword. They do not take it in their hand, but they put it in somebody else's hand in the hope of getting in by its means without its odium. It was a

gross mistake to make the free entrance of missionaries one of the concessions extorted after the Chinese War. And I shall never forget a reason given in my youth by Bishop Ellicott for voting for the Afghan War. He said it might be a means of getting Christianity and the Bible into Afghanistan. Nothing in truth has so much hampered our missionary success as the fact that we are a conquering people. We cannot expect our vanquished to love much the faith of their conquerors. The missions, the great and envied missions, of the early Church, which are said to have converted whole races, did not emerge from the priests of a conquering race or a military nation, but from that Catholic Church which was the binding, blessing, and pacific influence among the fighting nations. We have made the races we have touched long for our civilisation, but not for our religion. They envy our power; they have had little to draw them to our love. If it is not the men who are the backbone of India that we get as trophies of our missionary work, it is because the Indian patriots feel as if they would cease to be patriots if they took our religion; and thus we get too many of another sort. We cannot convert Indians who could convert India. I do not call what we get

worthless. That would be to denounce Indian missions. But we do not get the intellects the early Church got from the pagan world, and we do not get the people of influence—the kings, queens, and princes that made the missionary conquest of the South Sea Islands and Madagascar so comparatively easy. And one reason is that England in India has been better known by her sword and her factories than by her faith and love. These are considerations which not only explain the slow progress of missions abroad but some of the alienation of some minds from them at home.

VI

I will pass over the fact that the public is bewildered and overstrained with the multitude of beneficent claims and agencies to-day, and I will allude to the divisions within the Church itself. I speak not now of the religious anarchy of the public mind. Protestant missions have suffered much from the competitive spirit of the Churches. The great missions of the mediæval Church and of the Roman Church did not so suffer. There the missionary knew he had at his back the whole force of a united Christian world. He went out direct from the

bosom of the Church itself, he was not the agent of a society. But now that is impossible. Each section of Protestants has its mission—a fact which I am far from deploring. But without comity and delimitation between them it must not only confuse the native mind, but also inspire the ordinary observer at home with a sad sense of waste, of undignified competition, and of divided councils in the great attack on heathenism. It is a stupendous, an almost hopeless, task to the common eye, this of converting heathenism into Christianity. And many must feel that it is made still more hopeless if there be want of unity in the force which is to deliver the assault.

VII

But consider this also. Every age is not equally suited for brilliant missions. It need not be that the Christian missionary passion is really less in the Church, but no ardour can produce the same results without as with favourable opportunities. And it has been observed that the great missionary epochs were mainly those in which took place great disturbances of population, great rearrangements of races, or great new discoveries.

The great successes of the mediæval missions were connected with the Teutonic conquest of Europe. A fresh young race gave call and scope for the apostles of the faith, and kindled the imagination of the Church with the vision of a world of new spiritual possibilities. The great Roman missionaries appeared concurrently with, or soon after, the splendid discoveries by Spain and Portugal both to East and West, but especially Westwards in the discovery of America. The great Protestant missions which arose last century, and especially the London Missionary Society, can be historically shown to have sprung out of the effect produced on the religious imagination by the discoveries of Cook in the South Pacific. You know that the first efforts of the London Missionary Society were for long expended in the South Sea Islands, where indeed they have gained their most indubitable successes.

But to-day we have none of these things. We have no fresh races and worlds being thrust on our ken in the same way. The exploration of Africa is not what the discovery of Africa would have been. It rouses the public curiosity and interest, especially in the matter of markets, but it does not inflame the public imagination. No, the region of discovery to-day is rather in

the scientific realm, the scientific aspect of the world we have long known. It is the savant who is making new worlds to dawn on us, and new infinities to open away from our feet. And accordingly it is in that direction that much of the missionary and annexing energy of Christianity is going. More people than ever before are pushing the realm of Christian thought into the new regions of scientific discovery. We are busy doing for thought what we are also doing for politics—Christianising it. This too is missionary work. In every way Christ is preached and His kingdom spread. Let us widen our range of vision. Do not think the missionary soul is dying out of Christianity because it is spreading into new forms. At the first entry on these new forms some interest is sure to be withdrawn from the old. You cannot give the same attention, or perhaps the same capital, to the old business when you are starting a new alongside of it. But the moment you find the old in real danger you will return to it and give it your special attention again.

VIII

I notice, as a further explanation of whatever decay there may be in the public interest in

missions, that change in the Christian mind which has in some measure replaced piety by philanthropy, and made the gospel take a social rather than an evangelical form. We are more preoccupied with amelioration than salvation. As compared with the Christianity of half a century ago we are more sentimental both in the good sense and in the bad. We are more touched with the passion of pity. But it is not spiritual pity of the kind which moves missionaries to leave all things in order to supply the soul-needs of the poor heathen. It is only indirectly that current philanthropy can be said to be spiritual; its direct object is not spiritual but temporal destitution. Even missions themselves have felt the influence of this tendency, as we see from the institution of medical missions. The gravity of our social problems is absorbing so much of the fund of compassion that a less supply than before is available for missionary purposes pure and simple. At home we are in a social crisis. We have lost that ease and comfort, that contentment with the domestic order of things, which gave the old Dissenter leisure of mind and heart to consider the heathen. And it is to be confessed, too, that we have in some measure lost our own sense of the preciousness of the soul and the

supremacy of spiritual concerns. The passion to evangelise has in some measure died into the passion to assuage; and the salvation of Christ, taking the shape forced upon it by the crying exigencies of the hour, is more than ever bent upon redeeming the heathen misery which is not only at our own doors but on our own conscience. People feel that they did not create that outlying paganism; but they did create, our enormous prosperity has done much to create, the horrors which are being dragged to light before our eyes. We therefore feel in respect of domestic heathenism, not only that it is more miserable than foreign, but that it saddles us with a prior and more intimate responsibility which may easily for the time submerge interests of a remoter and more spiritual type.

This social mission is the kind which for the present impresses the popular imagination. Few missionaries do this, much as they deserve to do so. None among them since Livingstone are commanding figures in this sense. The popular Christian hero in foreign parts is of a military and absolute type, like Gordon. The public mind is not in tune to respond to work of the soul as once it did, and as it does still to other causes. And one can only hope that, when something has by time and wisdom been done

to deal with these most imperative needs, our sympathies may be again set free to cross the sea and consider the paupers there. There can be no nobler motive for pressing on domestic reform and the removal of home grievances than the desire thus to liberate our energies for the spread of our supreme blessing to other peoples of the earth.

IX

One has no business to criticise the missionary societies except in the interest of missions themselves. These bodies can afford to ignore the attacks of those whose objections are to missions entirely. But any expressed criticism on the policy and procedure of the societies should be eagerly welcomed as a frank contribution towards the help of men who have done and are doing a great, a splendid, but a most difficult work, and a work whose collective value only history will be in a position to assess. If there be any deficiency in public support, that is probably due to the suppressed criticism which will not be frank, and which takes the modern fashion of war and boycotts the society. It criticises it by mere abstention, or, by reducing its support, it makes the con-

fession that the missionary idea is losing its spell.

Acknowledging, then, the marvellous work done and doing by a marvellous expenditure of devotion and labour at home and abroad, it may be well to confess that in moving about one hears criticisms which it is a pity do not oftener come to explicit shape. I may add in passing that the impatience of criticism does not come from the officers of the societies so much as from some of their zealous supporters.

The remark that missionary work cannot be done by a society, but only by great missionary spirits of the heroic and all-renouncing type, is very far from correct. Let such spirits go forth by all means, but the existence of a society does not prevent that. But there is danger that a society should tend to discourage and repress the new and unfamiliar types of individual originality which may rise within its own pale. Organisation may kill spontaneity, and the missionary spirit has its very being in the free spontaneity of its Christian impulse. Of all branches of the Church the missionary societies ought to be most tolerant, most expansive, most sympathetic, in their temper and views. But complaint is made that it is not the tolerant and flexible side of Christianity

which is chiefly represented in the directorate of these societies, that the type of belief encouraged is rather the type which is in favour with the least informed and most sympathetic side of the Christian Church; that too little disposition is shown to link on to the existing types and forms of religion found in heathen civilisations; that a due distinction is not always made between the spirit of Christianity and its Western form, and a due readiness not shown, in approaching heathenism, to subordinate the latter to the former; that their theology of reconciliation is not a theology reconciling in its nature and methods; that there is the usual conservative dread of meeting native aspiration—that, for example, too little use is made to begin with of the sacred books of the old religions; that missionaries who have been affected by the newer and more sympathetic methods have been embarrassed and discouraged by the management at home; that enough scope is not given to the individual or enough freedom to his Christian enterprise and insight; that too much is expected from converts in whom live on the traditions and heredities of centuries of heathenism; that these are expected to take those forms of Christian life and thought which Europe only

arrived at after troubled centuries; that the older missionaries have been so long removed from the influence of the best English culture that they suffer under a like complaint to that which makes the Anglo-Indian quite incompetent as an English politician; that the obtaining of funds is made too prominent an object; that the work has been pushed too fast, faster than our measure of faith can go: that consequently the methods of the societies are too much at the mercy of those who subscribe the supplies but who are least competent to decide the more delicate and crucial issues which arise; and especially that, about the reports from abroad, which ought really to be business-like and consular, there is, for the sake of the religious world, an atmosphere of conventionality and partiality which the suspicious outer world takes for unreal and disingenuous; that in consequence the missionary becomes the agent of a concern more than of the Church, that he is professional more than apostolic, or, when he has zeal, has more zeal than ability; that the societies themselves rely too much on reports and results and too little upon the influence that would be exerted on the public imagination by the missionary idea itself illustrated in

powerful, free, and original men, or powerful, liberal, and original thought; that, for want of such things and the respect they breed, missionary enterprise has been too much at the mercy of caricaturists like Dickens and too sensitive to the public laugh.

These are specimens of the objections which are far from uncommon, and which I mention, not because they are my own, but because they are among existing causes (whether verifiable or not) which cool down missionary ardour in the public. Several of them I should challenge; but they say there is always some fire where there is smoke, and it would be well if any foothold for such remarks could be removed in so far as the policy of our societies can remove them. Some of the objections are inseparable from the conduct of missions by a society instead of by independent individuals proceeding directly from the heart of the Church. Others, again, would be met if the objectors ceased to do no more than object, and threw themselves with their large ideas into vital missionary interests, and took part in the control of missionary affairs. It is the criticism by abstention which is letting the control go into too conservative and timid hands, in so far as that is the case. When

all is said and all discounted moreover the triumphs gained and the work done are enormous. A very poor form of Christianity, it should be remembered, is far better than the kind of religion which has been expelled from the South Sea Islands, and which confronts you everywhere among the populace of India. I have been so frank with objections in order that I might convince you, when I beg you still to support the London Missionary Society, that I do not do so out of blind compliance with custom, but after some real consideration of the merits of the case. I am going to devote another evening to draw out for you the intimate, nay vital, connection of the missionary spirit with the Christian spirit. I am going to point out how with the failure of missionary zeal our religious action is lowered at the heart. But taking it for granted to-night that you believe this, I ask you to put your hand to the missionary agency which God's providence has placed nearest you, and, reserving all proper rights of criticising the conduct of affairs by your responsible body, still maintain and increase your support of the London Missionary Society—at least till you find a society better worth your missionary confidence. And I do not know where that is to be found.

SOME GROUNDS OF MISSIONARY ZEAL

"Behold, Thou shalt call a nation that Thou knowest not, and a nation that knew not Thee shall run unto Thee because of the Lord Thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified Thee."—ISAIAH lv. 5.

SOME GROUNDS OF MISSIONARY ZEAL

IN a previous discourse I discussed the causes of missionary apathy. I pointed out that in many cases the missionary spirit had not so much decayed as taken other forms. It had gone largely into philanthropy at home and Christian statesmanship abroad. Social influences had to a large extent taken the place of influences purely religious. Missions themselves were conducted, not by individual effort, not by the Church directly, but, as it is the age of machinery, by special societies for the purpose. It is an age of engines and the engineers. This is the type of missionary effort also characteristic of the socialistic tendencies of the present century. The wholesome instinct of England dreads a State socialism, but courts safety, and avoids explosion, by pursuing socialism on voluntary principles. We have in like manner missions managed not by the huge polities of the Churches, but by the freer

agency of voluntary societies, of special machines, whose success enriches the Church while their failure does not imperil it. I further pointed out that these societies, being small polities, could only thrive through the free exercise of that criticism upon them whereby alone political affairs are nobly, liberally, and efficiently carried on. I ventured to recapitulate some of the prominent objections and criticisms made upon the work and policy of the societies. And I did so not so much with the view of adopting and pressing these criticisms as to show that I had not excluded from consideration all that was urged against the work. And I said I thought the societies were in theological matters not quite abreast of the time, that they hardly recognised the changed and changing mood of the Church itself, any more than they had adapted themselves to the new democratic basis of operations. This last policy will become more and more pressing. The old steady contributors of large sums are passing away, wealth tends to flow in other directions, and the societies must endeavour to do more to interest and increase the contributors of small sums by inviting their criticism and participation as well as their support. And in like fashion the massive and exclusive theologies of the past

based on an oligarchy of saints are, if not breaking up, being greatly modified, and a more tolerant, liberal, and comprehensive spirit prevails in the holding of even the old beliefs. A feeling spreads that the forms of our Western theology are not always calculated to attract (to say nothing of converting and inspiring) the mind of India and China. The power of the everlasting gospel is not denied or attenuated, but its evidence and agency are sought rather in the shaping of congenial theologies in new lands, rather in empowering them to manufacture their own theology, than in the importation in bulk of the foreign product. To such considerations of statesmanlike flexibility and largeness it is complained that the societies are not yet as alive as they might be, or for the work's sake should be; and that the work in India, for example, is suffering owing to this cause. It is contended that a more liberal theological aspect would both attract the best public at home and the best heathen abroad.

But when all the force of criticism has been expended, it has to be borne in mind that its work is not destructive, but corrective. No criticism can supply solid ground for deserting the societies in contempt or despair. And if it did, the desertion of the societies does not mean

the surrender of the missionary idea. Christianity is missionary whatever be the policy or success of the societies. If the religion can create new Churches at need, it cannot be judged incapable of creating new missionary societies when the old are hopeless. But that would be a gratuitous task to lay upon the Christian spirit. At worst the societies need but adjustment, not discarding. Their foundation was no blunder of the Spirit, nor even an experiment. What they have done and are doing seems, the more one dwells on it, to suppress more and more the strictures which arise; and it needs, in a sympathetic heart, some useful oblivion of the vast positive results to clear mental space for criticism which it would be idolatry to withhold. It is only the petty supporters of the societies that can resent free criticism of their policy. But it is only the petty critics that have nothing but criticism to give.

The directest argument for missions is the reality of one's own Christian experience, and the illimitable expansion of gratitude and sympathy which in our best moments we feel. An argument still more powerful, though not perhaps with so many people, is the nature, genius, and idea of Christianity as the final

spiritual and universal religion. A further argument and corroboration is added by the history of Christianity itself since its entry into the world. And this argument is clinched by the enormous success of the missionary societies during the last hundred years—a success which fills one not only with a deep sense of the sweep and power of our religion, but with a genuine admiration for the zeal and strategy of those who manage missionary affairs.

In urging the claims of missionary effort on your attention, however, I will not follow exactly that order of consideration. I will rather begin with some which lie farther out and draw in upon the centre as I proceed.

And first, you will observe that savagery, or barbarism, or even paganism, is not a stable or permanent state of society, nor is it a condition inseparable from the coloured races. It is a state which must either gravitate downwards into extinction, as in the case of the imbruted aborigines of Australia, or it is one which must work upwards into some higher order of things. Leaving out of account those races, if there be any, which are hopelessly committed to extinction, and dealing only with those which have some potency of life still left, we observe that

there are two agencies, or perhaps three, by which they may and indeed must be taken in hand.

I

They may be got hold of by civilisation. But of civilisation there are two kinds. There is—

1. The civilisation which is quite cut off from Christian principle, however much it may have of the varnish of Christian name and religion. Such is the civilisation of some classes of English. Such is the civilisation of France. Such was the civilisation of Spain and Portugal in the age of American discovery and conquest. The history of the American aborigines proves what the effect of such civilisation is. It is the extermination of the lower race by war, massacre, and those vices and diseases which the lower races appropriate from a godless civilisation far more quickly than they take to its good. What befel the Mexicans at the hands of Spain is just what may befall the Malagasy at the hands of France, though in a slower form. And it is further to be remembered that the civilised race itself which has only its civilisation to go upon has a constant tendency to follow the exterminated race into brutality and decay. The brutality

may be of a refined sort, and the decay may be slow; but mere civilisation, unpermeated by real Christian influence, is simply paganism, whose inevitable tendency is to glide through refined lust and cynicism into a savagery as cruel as the primitive savagery, only with the feebleness of decrepitude instead of the vigour of youth. There is not in mere civilisation, in mere culture, the antiseptic force which arrests degeneration, and determines the progress in the direction of true development, as the Spanish America of to-day may tend to show.

2. Whatever therefore is to be done for an inferior race by civilisation must be done by a Christian civilisation—a helping and offering, instead of an exacting, civilisation—by a civilisation which is Christian in its moral temper, whatever its ritual or its theology may be. That is to say, it must be done by one of the two great missionary agencies of Christianity which I described as being the Church and the State. And a truly Christian State cannot but be missionary when placed among peoples of inferior privilege and power. It exercises that indirect but indispensable form of missionary agency which is the function and tendency of a Christian civilisation in contact with a civilisation lower in the scale. It is Christian

society in its saving aspect, its radiating, generous, sheltering, and beneficent aspect. The best example of this is to be found in the new spirit of British rule in India. And the utter difference between a civilisation truly Christian and one only nominally so is well exemplified in comparing the Spanish massacres in Mexico with the huge, and largely successful, efforts made by us to cope with Indian famines, as well as our less successful efforts to reduce Indian taxation to something short of the mere margin of livelihood. This is an order of missionary effort which will increasingly occupy the future of our politics. The missionary spirit of the Christian nation will become more and more indispensable to its own existence. And to keep our present position on the earth, we must strive to rest more on the confidence of the peoples we save, and less on the fears of those we conquer. We must erect trophies and monuments in the hearts of the vanquished by mercy rather than rear architecture in the subject lands. Moreover this is the only hope for those inferior races themselves. In the tremendous struggle for existence on the face of the earth, which will become a war of races, as among ourselves already it is one of individuals, there is no prospect but extermina-

tion for the inferior civilisations, except in one event—except in the spread among the higher races of that missionary Christian spirit which approaches the weak not to destroy but to fulfil, not to crush but to raise and preserve.

II

But apart from the indirect action of Christianity through civilisation and society, these lower races may and must also be reached by the direct agency of missionary religion. The collective action of Christian society cannot reach those springs of heart and conscience which have to be renewed for the real renewal of a race's life. Government can do little more than forbid, protect, remove obstacles, and offer facilities to a career. Society cannot act with searching renovating force on individuals. What of the soul that craves the career? Compared with the direct application of Christ to the soul, of religion to the heart, the action of Christian civilisation is negative and preparatory only. That is in general the relation of law to gospel. The Old Testament law itself was a ministry of grace. But it was so in quite a negative way compared with the fulness of grace in the ministry of the gospel. So with our political and our evangelical

agencies in the missionary cause. Our administration, as is the nature of law, can but act on the mass, even when it acts positively. It is a nation preaching to a nation, a race acting on a race, in the region of the general soul. But our evangelisation must proceed on more individual lines. And it is this individual action that is the most powerful factor in settling the future of the races with which we have to do. No Christianising of our policy can dispense with missionary effort in the more direct and special sense. And in the case of India, perhaps our Christian policy is preparing difficulties for us, and dangers, which can only be met by the subjection of the Hindoos as individuals to the control of the gospel. We have plied them with the literature of public liberty without preparing them, as Puritanism prepared us, by the influences of moral liberty. If we give a Christian emancipation without bestowing that inward Christian freedom which alone can safely manage enfranchisement, we may only be preparing for India revolution, anarchy, and new despotisms. It is a principle which applies at home as well as abroad. Every step in political enfranchisement entails a corresponding effort in the direction of evangelical personal religion, lest our new freedom be but a weapon placed in

hands subject only to passionate and selfish, and not to moral or spiritual, control.

Now, this principle of personal religion implies that a large personal latitude should be allowed by the societies at home to their agents abroad. They should have a free hand, not so much in committing their societies to outlay, as in adopting original methods, and offering original presentations of the gospel. I believe the care and consideration of their agents by the societies is very great, and almost tender, so far as resources allow. But I speak of a higher and more intelligent consideration, which is not so much for their persons as for their souls. These agents under the action of circumstances on the spot must undergo a good deal of correction, and subject their ideas and plans to a good deal of readjustment. And if they are men of quick vital spirit, and men of duly capable mind, they may possibly find at times a restatement of their truths to be an absolute necessity, both for their work's best success and for the continued vitality of their working spirits. It is to the missionary, not to his society, that we must look for the exercise of that individual influence for personal religion which is the core of missionary hope. The influence of a society must always be to a large extent of the indirect sort already

alluded to as a feature of the great society of the State; and it is a true part of its work to foster education in particular among the races with which it deals. A missionary society is really a small Foreign Office. Its sphere is a small State in itself, and its action must to a large extent partake of State methods and defects. And these they can only supplement and remedy by conceding a very ample freedom to the missionaries they send forth charged with the function of individual influence. No instruction to the outgoing missionary should be more emphatic than this—that he stir up the gift within him, that he develop fearlessly his Christian faith, and that he may look always to the society for large sympathy, its support, and latitude in so doing. The Churches should be taught to regard the occasional extravagance of some ardent spirit with more sympathy than the placid perseverance of those "blameless Bellerophons" whose schemes no winged Pegasus ever taught to stray. The benefit of such a policy would appear in the quality of man who would be attracted into missionary work. And, though Boards of Directors would experience perhaps at first a little more concern, yet they would in time recognise that their agents are not mere ad-

ministrative proconsuls, who have simply to carry out the instructions of the Foreign Minister of the day. They would come to feel that the missionary's real success was far more in proportion to his difference from an official than to his resemblance. It is only thus that the societies can meet the objection that the genuine missionary work is impossible to a society and possible only to indomitable individuals.

And we may put the matter more broadly and strongly still, and say that in India, at least, the future of missions depends on securing, either from English or native sources (but especially the latter) a large number of commanding personalities for missionary work. The soil is rapidly getting ready for their operations. The fallow ground of old paganism is breaking up. Its elements will soon have been long enough exposed to the disintegration of natural process. The need will not be for ploughers to plough. That is being wisely done by many agencies, whose shares go to the very subsoil, and whose spirit goes to the dividing of bone and marrow. The need and the cry will be, nay is, for sowers to sow, and especially for men who can stand the spiritual climate of the country and thrive on it. The call is for highly endowed natives in particular, able on the one hand to appropriate

the fulness of Christ's gospel, able on the other to issue it in terms of the Indian mind. Let us be as liberal and flexible as we may, yet we cannot easily do this. All we can do is to make our faith fascinating to those who can, to the flower of India. The old idolatries are breaking up. Caste even is beginning to crumble. The state of things is coming to be just what the pagan world was when Christianity entered it. Hindoo religion is just in the condition of Greek and Roman religion in the first century. This is a negative preparation and much of it is to be placed to the credit of the societies, as an offset against the small number and low class of their professing converts. But it is a serious thing to have taken away one religion without being able to replace it by another and a better. And it may be plainly said that the theology with which the missionaries went out a century ago will not do what has to be done for India. If we have no other hope than that, our case is desperate. That will not either attract or subdue the flower of India to the obedience of Christ. It has views of the Bible, of God, of Christ, and of the future too Hellenic and too mediæval to make such an event possible. And we must become convinced that it is the flower of India that we have to secure, if

our work and Christ's is to be done there. The conversion of low-caste Indians of non-Aryan race, even if they were much more numerous than they are, would not Christianise India. We get wrong notions sometimes on this head, drawn from wrong ideas about the spread of the early Church. We think of the Gospel making its way to the front by its slow effect upon the slaves and populace of the Roman world, as if its whole action during the first few centuries was upwards from the dregs of society and of intelligence. This is not so. Humanly speaking, but for the commanding mind of Paul it is hard to see how Christianity could have survived its first conventicles, or its mere Judaic disciples, with their national prejudices. And, after Paul, what would have become of Christianity in Europe had it not succeeded in mastering some of the greatest minds of the age, both from the Roman and the Alexandrian world? It was the splendour of the elect remnant of Paganism no less, at least, than the faith of the converted residuum which secured Europe. Those great figures whom we now hold transfigured as the archaic fathers of the Church were the protagonists of their age, the master spirits of the civilised world, versed in all the culture of the day,

and not afraid to express their Christian faith in the wonderfully, nay providentially, apt forms of Greek philosophy or Roman administration. The Church drew into it the intellect of the world to which it went. And it did so because it went before that world as a power rather than as a system; as a power with a system to make. The Christian faith when it presented itself before the culture of either East or West had not become a hardened scheme. It was making huge conquests while the Canon of Scripture, the formulæ of creeds, and the machinery of the Church were but forming. It was a spirit. It was a life. It was a deed. It was a gospel. It was a thing of principles rather than of dogmas, a thing of soul and power. So it was able to pass, like an insinuating, subtle, and shaping spirit, into the old philosophies and the old aspirations; which it could never have done had it emerged upon them as the crystallised system which latter-day missionaries have had to take in their hands. This spirit, this life of the new faith, laid hold of the choice minds and the most potent lives of the then world, and Europe was converted by Europeans, not by Jews; it was converted by the conversion of the flower of Europe, through the spiritual and intellectual aristocracy of the

West, just as we say India should be converted, if she is to be converted as a nation at all. There is surely life enough in Christ still to do for the moribund paganism of India what He did for the effete paganism of Greece and Rome. What is the use of dying systems to fight dying systems? It is a ghastly work that, to set creeds upon each other *in extremis*, that they may have their death struggle in each other's embrace. And it is foolish work besides. Either we do or do not believe that Christ hath life in Himself. If we do not, our missions are mockeries. If we do, then let us go, and let us send, bearing in our own souls that inexhaustible life, opening its gospel upon the thirsty world of creeds outworn, and leaving it to Christ Himself to give it a body in every land as it shall please Him. The political aspirations of this country are meeting and mingling with the political aspirations of India. What is the matter that our religious aspirations are not doing the same? But that political effect was not produced till the old systems and traditions of Indian government were given up, and the political *genius* of England began to act on India. And the religious result will not accrue till the systems and traditions of the religious world are lightly worn, and we go to India with the genius of

Christianity. That is Christ, and the Cross of Christ, which is the Gospel of the holy Father of the world, with His universal and redeeming love. Then, if at all, Christianity will appeal to the mind and soul of India, not to a scattered few of its populace. And the flower of India will scatter the seed over the length and breadth of the land, and carry the cross where European feet have never trod, and could not tread. The Indian systems of thought present, like the ancient Greek, certain affinities to Christian truth, and offer singular foothold for a spirit so subtle, nimble, and adaptable as the Christian spirit. And a new and distinct form of Christianity may be looked for, destined to enrich the glory of Christ more than many conversions of mere individuals, when India's past, by India's living and present soul, interprets the ever-living and present Christ to India's future. Then shall Christ in turn interpret India to herself; and as now in Christian light we see the meaning and destiny of Greece as Greece herself never saw it, so we shall by our religion give India to herself in a far more deep sense than if we made over the peninsula to its own sons for government, and withdrew our forces and administrators to our own side of the sea.

The first ground for missionary zeal therefore is the instability of the lower civilisations. And this fact comes home and saddles us of the higher with a great responsibility, because our intercourse with them is so great, so growing, and so constant. If Europe were shut within Europe, it would have no such serious responsibility arising from this source, from the labefaction of the lower societies. This is a source which would impose on us no responsibility if the inferior race lay quite out of the range of our intercourse. We might desire in that case, and ought to desire, to save such races, out of Christian sympathy and the responsibility of Christian brotherhood. But the duty would not arise then from the mere sense of the instability of the lower race's existing condition. We should have no such responsibility towards an inaccessible race which we heard of by some sort of balloon post as decaying within walls of thick ribbed ice round the north pole. But the special responsibility arises from the fact that our contact with these races is at present the mightiest influence in the complex of their experience, that no cause is working on them so powerfully for revival or for decay as European contact. And it is therefore a matter of the gravest responsibility, to any civilisation

with a conscience to feel responsibility, how that contact shall act. Shall it hasten the extinction of these races, or shall it so foster their preservation as to give them the chance of a new birth and a new life? I have insisted that any civilisation which is Christian in spirit must use its efforts in a reviving and preservative direction, but I have further urged that such general national and indirect effort is not enough. We must give these races the secret of our own power, and teach them, among all imported industries, the manufacture of men. We must use means to bring to bear on them the purely religious and individual influences which lie behind our political prosperity. We must deal with them as individuals, by individual and voluntary effort, and not as mere masses, by the machinery of the Christian State, or the contagion of Christian civilisation. We must give them that in their own souls which makes States Christian and keeps them so. We must attract, and enlist, and inspire the most considerable personalities among them. We must win many rich, many wise, and many noble from among them to the Christian faith, power, and ideal. We must lift the policy, already pursued, of native teachers to a much higher level and significance. We must employ the gifted

men so gained in Christianising not India only but the Indians. Did I say employ? That was wrong. They shall be no employees of ours. They shall go forth as apostles, not in our service or pay, but in the service of Christ and their country, as among ourselves gifted men rise with their gifts, and cast them into the treasury of the nation's true wealth, and lift us to ever higher levels of insight and attainment. If Hindoos accept enough of our culture to serve their country by entering our Parliament, is it preposterous to dream of Hindoos accepting from us a culture which, though Christian, should not cease to be Hindoo in its sympathies and ideals, and then going back as missionaries of the new creed among their own people? If educated Hindoos may come to serve their country through our institutions, why should not educated Hindoos come to serve their country in our religion, which is ours in no sense of monopoly or supremacy, but is equally theirs? A time may come when the missionary societies may have the offer and the chance of educating such men. Caste and prejudice may soon so give way that Indian youths of the higher ranks and powers shall propose themselves to some of the societies, not for the work of the native teacher or even of the ordinary

missionary, but for the highest education Europe can give, with the object of returning to India to spread freely and independently the faith and love of a Christ who shall speak to India in a native mental dialect.

Be that as it may, enormous calls will yet be made on the missionary societies, and enormous chances offered to them. And if they are allowed to starve and dwindle meanwhile, how is the great future to be met? I say the work they are doing is work (criticise it as you will) which has in it the power and destiny to grow. It is not dying work. It is not work worthy to die. It is work needing for its development only the larger hope, and the larger sympathy, and the larger practical interests of the Church at home if we could escape from the triviality which is our mildew. And it is work whose record is enough to kindle all the sympathy its future needs if you will view it in its large features, its formative idea, and its gross results.

I have spoken of India especially because it is there that the crux of missions lies. I might have equally spoken of China—especially of late years. Succeed there, and there can be no more talk of failure anywhere. But the political relation of India

to us makes a peculiar demand on our national missionary resource, whether political or voluntary. And as much or more could be said about missions of the simpler sort, where no ancient and hereditary civilisation has to be met, but only wild beasts of passion in dense jungles of ignorance. The story of African missions, of South Sea missions, of missions manifold in similar circumstances, is a story that cannot possibly end as a mere epic torso, or fall with the mere past as a truncated romance. To withdraw support from missions at present is not simply to maim them, it is to decapitate them. They have gone too far. You have encouraged them to go too far to stop now. They have become organisms too highly developed to bear amputation without shock or fatal risk. It is only the low amorphous organisms that you can starve and lop without seeming to affect their vitality. As you rise in the scale mutilation means more and more danger, and you can hardly venture on it without being prepared to kill. The societies themselves are not preparing to die. They are not moribund for want of ideals, nor bankrupt in Christian courage, or even British pluck. There is no surer sign of heroic strength in a commander sometimes than a wise disregard of

human life. And when I read that the London Missionary Society has since 1876 sent into Central Africa twenty-three men, of whom ten have died and nine retired ill, and yet that the Directors have solemnly resolved "to prosecute the Mission with greater earnestness than ever"—as I read that, I answer with a thrill that this is not only pluck, not only bravery, but courage on the heroic scale, and courage of the quiet, sustained sort that an intense Christian faith alone could feed. It is strategy of the large, exalted kind such as the true-born soldier loves. It is such courage of faith as makes the annals of Christian heroism to shine. And it is courage of the anointed unearthly sort, in the face of fearful odds, such courage as the British heart should warm to with its inheritance of the valour of old Rome.

> "The gods may choose a conquering cause,
> The conquered cause be mine,"

was the soul of old Cato. And it is but right and sound that the grand stoic heart of old paganism should pass into the spirit of a missionary body whose business it is, not to ignore or despise the paganisms of to-day, but to uplift and transfigure them, beat them, so to

speak, in their own valour, and show them to themselves glorified and perfected in the glory of Christ.

Things like these do not show a loss of self-confidence or failing faith in the cause or its prospects. And these men call upon us for our pittance of pecuniary help. You see their stern resolve, their devoted patience, their audacious prudence. And you have it muffled almost to a solemn whisper in the floating voices of those whose graves are baking in African suns or soaking in malarial swamps. They invoke you not to let their lives be wasted and their agony, blood, and sweat be thrown away by leaving the work they have so baptized. This work has cost too much to be dropped now. You can only save an investment by investing more. And no work so begun in death can end in anything but victory, unless Christ's conquest of the world by dying for it be a dream. And it is only a type of the mission field at large. That field is a grand Aceldama—a field of blood. It is the graveyard of our hero brothers. There are too many precious bones moulder-ing there for us to leave it to be trodden down by the resurgent hordes of a paganism they had begun to conquer. Long ago the

flower of Europe's chivalry poured out their toil and blood in a frenzy of enthusiasm for the Holy Sepulchre, and the land

> "Over whose acres trod those blessed feet
> That many hundred years ago were nailed,
> For our advantage to the bitter cross."

And the age of chivalry is not wholly past, though its inspiration and its shape have changed. The people is deeply sunk that permits and ignores the desecration of its precious tombs. We love our world because it was once the grave of our Christ. We love our faith, our creed, because it is the shrine of our dying Saviour and the creation of our living Lord. We love our native land because we live on a soil enriched and hallowed with the dust of all the heroisms that most concern our national life. Well, are we not citizens of the kingdom of heaven? And wherever the name of Christ has come is the country of the kingdom. And that soil, too, is rich with noble tombs and faithful dust. We cannot consent to abandon the tombs of our missionary past, or let go to waste the work which so much blood has sealed. We cannot abandon to the wild beasts the cemeteries of our holy and heroic dead. We could do so only by confess-

ing our missionary expeditions to have been blunders, and our apostles the victims of some infatuated mistake, some deplorable visionary epidemic. And when we have come to that we have really gone much farther. We have confessed our Christianity itself a mistake, its sight of Christ a dream, its vision of a redeemed world a fancy, and all its triumphs of thought and deed, its crosses, so plentifully dotted over the earth and for the most part known only to the Lord of the Cross—all that we have virtually declared to be poetry of the kind which has but a distant bearing on the reality of things. For I shall have to show you that it is the very soul of Christianity which is the genius of the missionary spirit and the reality of Christianity which is denied when its missionary destiny is impugned,

I am much concerned that you missionary sympathisers should be roused and secured by reflecting on considerations of a wide and modern sort, rather than that you should simply have that interest stirred by the proceedings of any particular society. For I cannot avoid observing that the objections taken to missions are taken to a large extent by those who claim first and always to be broad and liberal; and they are taken also to a

large extent on the ground of what is deemed unsatisfactory in the proceedings of some or all of the societies or their agents. But it would be the greatest of misfortunes if breadth of view should come to be associated only with the critical, cold, and less generous side of life; if only such views were allowed to be rational as made against the methods and ideas which have come down to us from the past. The grand function of reason, after all, is not destructive but constructive, and the nature of true reason is something far more high and worthy than is to be found in the mere judgment of the past or the criticism of procedure. The supreme function of reason is to pierce and seize the essential and informing idea, to appreciate the distinctive genius and native tendency of any movement or institution, and to preserve its soul and quality not only unchanged but exalted amid all the changes of form suggested by the free criticism of results. What is the use of faith in an idea if it do not carry us through the stage when facts seem against it? "I am not ashamed of His gospel; for I know that He is able to keep that which He committed to us." Nothing is less reasonable than many forms of so-called Rationalism, and it is a matter of regret that

the greatest movements of thought and conscience should have been robbed of so good a name as Rationalism by the word having sunk almost hopelessly to designate what is but a menial function of the reasonable soul.

I would therefore guide your attention to the rational and ideal side of this subject, not with the poetic purpose of expanding an idealism merely imaginative, but of expounding an idealism which is simply the soul of reality. And in so doing I seek to follow the Christian method, and fortify you by principles against the vicissitudes of mere individual opinion or temporary circumstance. I pursue the Christian method. For we are rightly taught in Protestantism that we are to judge the Church by Christ and not Christ by the Church. We are taught that none of the most lamentable spectacles which Church history offers in parody of the faith of Christ should weigh with us to the throwing over of Christ Himself. And we are invited to claim our place in the Christian Church not because of its splendid history but because of its unique inspiration, its eternal power, and the infinite grace resident in its Centre and Head. We are not Christ's because we belong to the Church, but we are of the Church because we belong

to Christ. There lies, in a few words, the whole difference between an ecclesiastical system and a Christian. What a power over the world, over the vicissitudes of history, we have in this position! Rooted in Christ, we are not uprooted by any errors in Church methods, any failure of Church aims, any infidelity of Church practice or belief. We stand above these things in the commanding mind of Christ Himself, and we are in a free and capable position to measure the city of God with an angel's golden rod, to walk about Jerusalem and go round, and tell its towers, and mark its bulwarks, and note the breaches, and build up the waste places, and even pull down its battlements and build greater. We have the key of history put into our hands just because we are so free of history. It is a sadly remarkable thing that the Catholic Church, whose very life lies in long history, in a historic line rather than a historic centre, in being able to make out a flawless line of tradition and an official succession unbroken—that that Church is not the quarter to which we look for the true, scientific, and commanding treatment of history. But in the field of historic study we find the triumphs of achievement in the Protestant spirit and the Protestant

lands, where men descend upon the past from the height and power of the scriptural Christ instead of burrowing their way up into the light of God through the dense and contorted strata of tradition. We interpret the Church by the Spirit, which is the fruitful and powerful method. We do not interpret the Spirit by the Church, which is a method sterile and wrong.

So I am anxious to impress your conviction with the missionary idea, rather than weary your attention with missionary results. When the hostile results have been discounted the power of the missionary idea is unimpaired. And if you are well secured in the faith that missions, however they may fail or be mismanaged, are yet *true and necessary*, then you will not only escape a sinking heart at their reverses, but you will be inspired anew to contribute your own corrections and readjustments with a view to future success. Your criticisms will be sympathetic. These corrections might involve change, not of procedure only, but of policy; but missions, you will feel, must go on, as England must go on, with such changes, reforms, and candid confessions of past failure or error as circumstances require. I would kindle in you the missionary spirit,

not as a mere gleam which will be broken up in rough water, nor as a glow one day to cool, but as an essential principle and idea which the hottest experience does but anneal and fix. I would, indeed, so inspire you with the missionary idea that it shall seem to be the very being and genius both of Christianity and of England, nay of civilisation; so that the action of the various missionary societies shall be only parts and aspects of the mighty process and the inevitable tendency of a Humanity redemptive because redeemed.

THE NATIONAL ASPECT OF MISSIONS

THE NATIONAL ASPECT OF MISSIONS*

MUCH has been written, and well, as to the prevalence of "natural law in the spiritual world." There are many acute and beautiful analogies between the phenomena of nature and spirit. But they are little more than illustrations or analogies. Drummond's book is a long sermon, not a treatise of philosophic value. If there be unity and continuity in the two spheres, it is the higher that gives the law to the lower, and not *vice versâ*.

To me it is far more interesting to trace the dawn of spiritual law in the natural world, and seek the continuity there. I would not interpret the doctrine of election by the law of natural selection; I would interpret natural selection by spiritual election.

It lowers the moral temperature to think of the spiritual life as natural. That life,

* Preached at the Centenary of Rev. William Knibb, and at Kettering, his birthplace.

being of grace and the Cross, reverses nature. When people are morally uneasy about certain acts they fall back on nature and say they are natural. They carry natural law into the moral world. War, for example, is justified as a natural means of keeping down the population to the limit of subsistence. But when you rise to the level of beings with a conscience law ceases to be natural; it begins to be supernatural. Then the natural thing is to obey conscience and not nature. War in such cases is the survival of a lower stage, the dying twilight of a lower realm. It is more of an anachronism every rising generation.

The survival of the fittest and strongest, the monopoly by the superman, being a matter of mere power, is the law of the natural world. But the law of the spiritual, being of grace, includes not only the care of the weak but the recovery of the lost. Amid much that is tender, patient, and helpful there is nothing *redemptive* in the natural world; yet that is the law of the spiritual. It is better to trace the fine dawn of grace in the lower creation than the horrible survivals of nature in the higher. Maternal devotion in monkeys, or the civic instinct in bees and ants, is a more cheering

spectacle, a more spiritual prophecy, than militarism among men. It has more of the future in it. The most prophetic thing in nature is the mother love in animals. And the most reactionary feature in society is war. Heartlessness is horrible in the higher just because it is higher. We resent these survivals the more we respect ourselves.

We are higher because we have in conscience something which gives law. In nature we have only what obeys it. And the conscience, ever since the Cross, has been in its ideal redemptive.

Too much has also been made of the way in which peoples, nations, societies grow like an organism. We are fond of tracing with Bagehot the analogies of "physics and politics." And too little tends to be made of the fact that the higher we go in the scale the more unlikeness we see between the two kinds of evolution. A Church does not grow like a tribe. A high society feeds the weak, a low one feeds on them. The East India Company of the eighteenth century devoured India, the British Government of the twentieth feeds it through famines, and slowly invites its peoples into self-government. We are here at the opposite pole from nature—in the realm of

grace. Huxley has admitted a great limitation on evolution from this very point of view. He admits here the hopeless collision of evolution with ethics.

Nature says, Let those survive who can, who are fit. Grace says, Let us make them fit—fit for the eternal survival by giving them eternal life. Nature and the natural man devours the weak, grace and the gracious man lifts them up. We learn to survive by the power we lend others to survive.

But if so, then our missions are a triumph of social evolution. They represent one of the highest forms of social progress, perhaps the highest. They show us one society helping a weaker—not only its own weaklings, but another and weaker society, and even rounding upon many of its own members in order to do so. This is the kind of evolution which sets a Church above a nation or a race, and drives a man for the sake of the gospel to leave his nation, and almost forget it, in the new affection for lands that are his only in Christ. Even nations, and not only Churches, may grow to this.

Mark how we have grown in this matter. Observe the progress of history toward the Christian ideal. Note the stages of its advance.

I

In the lowest stages of society when one tribe meets another the doom of the weaker is *extermination.* It is so with the brutes, it is so with savages, it is so in semi-civilisation. And religious sanctions even are called in to aid the process. The god of the tribe is jealous of the god of the other tribe and is believed to order the extermination. This was believed by Israel to be the will of Jehovah in the conquest of the Canaanites, and bitterly the later history of Israel avenged the error—as history always does avenge that policy, in America, in Africa, or elsewhere. It is the barbaric way of treating the stranger or the weak, the military way. They are made Amalekites and wiped out.

II

But gradually another consideration enters in. Instead of killing the conquered can we not use them? Ferocity gives way to policy. Let them be enslaved. They are allowed to keep their religion under certain restrictions, but they are turned to account. They are not

exterminated, but *exploited*. They are made Gibeonites.

That is how the Egyptians treated the Israelites, for they were a step above Israel in civilisation. And it is how pagan Europeans regard inferior races. It is how the Southern whites in the United States regarded the negro. It is how many Englishmen regard "niggers" at this time. It is how almost all Englishmen, except Penn and his Quakers, regarded them up to the great evangelising age at the close of the last century. It may be called the commercial way of treating the weak—as slaves, as coolies, or as markets, as mere means and not ends, as "hands" and not souls.

This is the treatment of inferior races which marks a plutocracy. It is a treatment which has revived in certain forms of relapse to-day, because the ruling principle in politics is finance and the ruling idea of the State is the economic. The god of such an age is Mammon, and the hustler is his prophet, and most of the press his acolytes. The military State gave place to the mercantile, the feudal to the industrial; and it will now need all the resources of our Christianity to translate the mercantile State into the moral, to keep righteousness higher

even than efficiency, and to deliver industrialism from its own forms of iniquity. We do well to be angry with ineptitude, with pretentious mediocrity, but we do better still to be angry with wrong. And I fear our anger at wrong is not so easily and generously roused as it once was. We let the plea of trade cover too much. We use man for the purposes of commerce instead of commerce for the purposes of man. We are in danger of sacrificing to higher wages and larger profits sympathies and chivalries which would make better men of us. And for prosperity we are tempted to forget principles whose neglect is always avenged in calamity or ruin. The most serious commercial issue of the hour is not Free Trade or Fair Trade, but Foul Trade. Apart from tips, commissions, and bribery at home, think of the opium trade in India and China, the rum trade in Africa, the "blackbirding" in Queensland. What of the Congo Company and its ways in Central Africa? What of the Chartered Company in South Africa, of the Raid with its progeny of blood, fire, pestilence, ruin, and grief in a great war? What of the instigators, abettors, and apologists, living and dead? What of the Turk, who must be allowed to massacre and outrage Armenian and Mace-

donian because of the commercial convenience and political balance of Christian Europe? Our very religion, our Churches, become infected with the passion to prosper at any price. Many of them do not live, they are "run." May God send us prophets to save the kingdom of God from the calamity in prosperity and the usurpation by finance!

III

But there is a higher stage than exploitation. The conquering race has probably a religion that it prizes. It begins to treat the weaker race religiously—to use it for its religion. But it begins that in a barbaric way. It despises the religion of the weaker race; and it demands the adoption of its own, as a landlord might compel a tenant to go to church or leave his farm. It is no longer the two races that come into collision, but their faiths, their moral ideals. It is not a race conflict, but a faith conflict. What is aimed at is not extermination nor exploitation so much as proselytism. This is the *ecclesiastical* way of treating the weak.

The most striking case is in Mohammedanism. But it has been the spirit also of some forms

of Christian missions—*e.g.*, the Roman Church and the Spanish conquest in America. It exists in principle in our Indian Empire to this day. I suppose the salary of the Bishop of Calcutta (and others) is a charge on the Indian budget raised from the grinding taxation of the natives. They are forced to support, if not to accept, the religion of their conquerors, as we have been treated for Church schools; so that the practice is not extinct yet in England. It is of the nature of an Established Church. It is assumed that an Established Church is a higher religion, and its believers look down on the rest, tax them for its good, and force them to contribute to its aggrandisement.

Has it not also, in more refined forms, crept into Protestant missions of the older school? All religions but ours are utterly false. Believe in mine, and in my form of it, or you are for ever lost. The great object of missions on this level is numerical *conversions*.

Well, I suppose that is a better thing than the Turkish passion for extermination. And it is a better thing than the mere trader's passion for exploitation, for markets, for profiting by the people at the cost of any demoralisation. I have alluded to our Indian opium traffic and to the rum traders. Look

also at the veiled slavery of the black races in the guise of controlled labour which is really coerced. I cannot admit that munificent gifts from that source to scientific institutions will expiate the debasement of the peoples who are exploited to make the money and spread the Empire. And I would in fairness make a real distinction between millionaires, like Lever or Cadbury, who return in dew upon their workers what they receive from their sweat, and those who exploit the natives of foreign lands, and even demoralise them, for the mere aggrandisement of their own.

IV

But there is something still higher than conversion either to our creed or empire. The sole object of missions is not conversions. Of course it seeks conversions, but not that alone. Nor is it the aggrandisement of a Church. Missions are but Christianity in aggressive action at home or abroad; and Christianity has a larger scope than even individual conversions. There is a grander word than even "conversion": it is "redemption." We are to-day doing honour to the memory of Knibb. Knibb at the call of God had to leave the work

of conversion, and take his glorious part in the wider work of redemption. He left the converting of individuals for the mission of redeeming the whole class. The one necessitated the other. He had to become the champion of his converts. First he gave the blacks a freedom which made them unfit to be slaves, then he had to take from the whites a freedom which made them unfit to be masters.

Redemption was effected by Christ for the whole race, and it changed not only its religion but its whole moral condition and ideal. And it does this for the various races within the race. It is well to convert a man, it is more to convert an age. That goes far to redeem a whole people. You may only convert from one religion to another. But you redeem from evil to good, from a low life of sense to a high life of spirit, from public egotism to public righteousness. You convert from one faith to another, from paganism to Islam, from Brahminism to Buddhism, from Confucianism to Christianity. But you redeem from unfaith to faith, from the world to God, from self to Christ. You convert the soul, but you redeem the whole man. You may convert to a new affection, but you redeem to a new righteousness as well—which the Cross chiefly did. It was the great

act of public righteousness for the world. He who converts may be thinking most of his theology or ecclesiastical system, like the Jesuits. But he who redeems is thinking most of the conscience or the society he reclaims for Christ and gladdens and kindles for mankind.

To convert you may go in the name of a Church, to redeem you must go in the name of a person—of Christ. You may go to convert as men go seeking votes for a policy. But when you go to redeem it is hearts you must seek, and it is heart you must bring, yourself, your faith, and love, and suffering. Conversion may be individual and numerical. Redemption is organic and social as well. Conversion is only a stage in redemption, it is not all. Yet it is necessary. With a religion like Christ's you cannot redeem without converting; see only that you convert to Christ and to the kingdom of God.

Among the many changes passing over our religion, missions are not unaffected. And among their changes this is one—that they are extending the spirit of mere conversion to the spirit of redemption.

First they go to find and make men, and not mere members of a new society—to make Christian men and not only Christians. And

secondly they go to uplift the weak race *as a race*, to give it the spirit of independence and self-help even at the cost of our own political supremacy. Politics grow redemptive. They go to claim the lower race, not for a Church simply, or for a religion, but for humanity in Christ—to enrich this race with Christ and Christ with the race. They go in love and pity to redeem—not so much to conquer as to make conquerors.

That a strong nation should bless a weaker nation and help it to its feet is a great effect and triumph of Christianity in history. It was not known before Christ. It has been too little known since Christ, but it has been known. How often England has done it! No nation has done it so often. I doubt if we are much bent that way to-day, I confess. We are in the trough of a reactionary wave concurrent with a partial eclipse of Christian faith. But it has been done, and done by us, more than once. And it was Christ that did it, through us. It is a Christian product. And it is as much of a miracle, a new departure from Nature, a new creation, as when man first appeared, dimly self-conscious, on the earth.

Commerce goes and it often extinguishes weak races—as war does, though in a different

way. Its inspiration is too often covetousness; and an impatient, selfish generation kills with its greedy vices the goose that would have laid golden eggs for the next. But the missionary effort of the religion of redemption goes to preserve these native races, and teach them to enjoy for themselves what the conqueror trader would seize. The antagonism between the missionary and the exploiter is perennial. You have to-day the same contempt and enmity to the missionaries in pagan Europeans as raged in the West Indies against Knibb a century ago. "The missionaries make the nigger too independent to be good for anything."

It is true Christianity does make the native more difficult to deal with in one way. You cannot introduce it into any race and expect that they will remain docile pietists without a growth of self-respect and public rights. The free workman is always more difficult to handle than the serf—for the slave-owner's habit of mind. But it is free labour that pays both sides and slavery does not. That discovery was the finishing stroke to the slave trade. You cannot have paying commerce with an industrial army destitute of self-respect. Our commerce would pay better and cost less if our workmen had more of it, and were attached to the

ministers as they are to the publicans. Faith does raise a man's self-respect, and makes him difficult for any master who will not recognise it.

Even Christian men speak sometimes as if missions were a pushing concern in which they had no shares; and they stand by, curious, critical, sometimes cynical, sometimes scornful. They think it is an occupation, a hobby, of the sects.

But it is really a work of the race they belong to. It is the great Christian energy of the race, its greatest foreign policy as it rises in the moral scale. It is a national enterprise. In one form or another it is bound up with national stability and permanence. Those men have shares in this business. They have shares in England, and England is a trustee of the great world-gospel. England exists like any other nation (though signally) for the kingdom of God. And God will permit it to exist only for its service to that kingdom of all nations. For the days come when the nation that has not the missionary principle will be left behind by those that have. The two great nations in the world to-day are the two great missionary colonising peoples—the English and the German. Missions are the great colonial policy of the kingdom of Christ.

The progress of society I have been urging is growth in helpfulness. As peoples rise in the scale they rise from killing to using, from using to converting, from converting to redeeming. They say to the lower race, first, "Go to perdition," then, "Come into our service," then, "Come into our church," then, "Come into our Christ."

That moral ascent must go on. Nations will be great by their power to redeem the less favoured nations, not by their power to crush them and domineer. England has begun to impress her national Western genius on India, and that may submerge India either in resignation or revolt. Can she print on India her Christ? Can she weave India into the kingdom of God? If she have a Christ she cannot help doing so at last. If she fail to do so, it will be because she has no longer a Christ in any real national sense. And without a Christ, with nothing but a State or a Church, England herself has no moral interest and no future. She is hollow and doomed. She is fallen from grace and how can she redeem? How can she but relapse?

V

We are apt to think of the great movement of history as a movement onward from the past into the present, from the present into the future. But is that all? Is going forward just going onward? That is only an extension of time. It only increases the amount of years, their *quantity*. What is to be said about their quality? Is there not another movement within every life besides that which hurries it on to the next? Is there not a movement which changes the nature of a century as well as adds to its years? Is there not a movement of what you might call translation, or transformation, as well as extension? Is the world not being changed as well as prolonged? Take your own case. If you only grow older and no better is anything gained? As you grow older must you not grow wiser, juster, kinder, holier? Must your life not be translated from the material upwards to the spiritual. from slavery to the temporal up to freedom in the eternal? The right life is a translation of life from time to eternity. It is laying hold of eternal life. Our fathers would have said it was a life spent in preparing for heaven. We oftener now say in making heaven. So

the history of the world is a long slow process of translating time into eternity—not of transposing the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, but of translating temporal issues into eternal, and earthly motives into spiritual. Forward movements are fatal unless they are also expansive movements. History is not simply carrying over one age into the next, but changing time into eternity within each age. No age has done its duty to the next till it has handed on to the next a legacy more eternal than it received. It is the eternal in the past that really lives on in the present and the future. What is eternity? Not mere duration, but the mastery of the spirit over time, the conversion of time to the uses and powers of the spirit. At the heart of each moment eternity stands, as your eternal soul is within your little body. And the work of history is to give freer and freer play to that eternity within each moment, and to make it rule all time. Christ Himself arose at a point within human history and stands at a particular moment of it. And the whole business of history is to give Christ His eternal place in the whole course of history, His true and ruling place; to let loose the eternity locked in those brief thirty years, and give it

its ruling place in all the affairs of time. The whole course of history is a vast missionary movement to release Christ from the past, to spread Him, to establish Him in the life of a world foreign to Him and far from Him, tending to be earthly, dark, cruel, and miserable. It is to set up the kingdom of God among the kingdoms of this world and above them.

What is the inference for national life? Surely that nation has the future which has most of this large translating spirit in its policy. I will make no comment on passing affairs, I will leave you to make your own. But if there be a principle at work above parties, politics, and politicians, it is the principle of the kingdom of God. No man who does not own it is fit to control the affairs of a Christian people. No weapon raised against it shall prosper, and the nation that continues to withstand it shall utterly perish. This service of the world and the future is the righteousness which exalts a nation. And there is no sound way of measuring either the future or the world but in Christ and His service.

Who are the greatest races to-day? Not necessarily those with a great past. They are those that have the promise of the future. And who are they that possess the future of the

world? They are those who are doing most for Christ and all that a universal Christ stands for.

The long past did not exist for the sake of our twentieth century present. Both past and present exist for the sake of a time to come—a time always coming and never fully here. We live for the majority, do we not? But where is the majority? Ahead of us, always ideal, but no less a power. Do you believe that the majority of the race is already born and dead? No, it is to come. Add the immortal dead in heaven to those yet to be born, who are all one vast solidarity, and the majority is awaiting us, it is not behind us. If our principle is the good of the majority, it means the good that is to be. Which is the best sect, party, Church, or State? That which contributes most to the good of most. Then it is that which does most for the future. It is not the individual that is the goal, nor the the present, but the vast and total future. The State itself, any State, must always be the servant of society at large. It has mostly been the victim of the past, or it has been the slave of the present, but it must more and more become the servant of the time to come. The authority of the past has held us back

from much; we shall truly advance as we substitute for it the authority of the future.

But where shall you find that future? Who knows it? Who can read it? Who can study its demands so that we can do for it what is best, and sacrifice for it as we should? Who can grasp all human society? What statesman can guide his State with certainty to that long prosperity which consists in the best service to human kind? Where shall we read that human kind whose thickest end, so to say, is still in the ages to come? How shall we interpret that authority which resides in a future longer than all the past and commands us from there?

It has but one voice—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the super-historic Christ that lived two thousand years ago, that reigns now from heaven, shapes history through the ages, and fills the eternal future with His infinite life.

There is a Christ of nations as well as of souls. The nation with a real future is the nation with a real Christ, to which Christ is a real Lord. The race that best serves Him best serves the future, and best serves its own destiny. His is the righteousness that exalts a nation. There is no permanence for any people

or empire but in the kingdom of God, and no safe leader but one who believes it and serves it. No man has the real key of the world unless he is at heart an unworldly man.

We owe more than we can say to those missionaries who toil, suffer, and die as pastors in local spheres, and founders of single Churches in the heathen world. But the life of a man like Knibb reminds us how much we owe to those who carry the missionary idea into our national life, and compel our half-pagan civilisation gradually to recognise the Christian moral principle in public affairs. A national Church is neither here nor there (I wish it were anywhere but here). But a national Christianity is essential to our national place. And England has no better benefactors than those who infuse, or who force, the principle of Christ's kingdom into our public affairs at home and abroad. And it is not the least of misfortunes from a national Church that it deludes the public into the notion that when we have established the Church we have done our duty to Christ on its public side, and it matters less to establish Christian principle in our conduct of affairs. It is all of a piece with the pharisaism which leads a man to think that if he go to church and support its

ordinances he need not be so particular about Christianity in his affairs.

A life like Knibb's reminds us that, for some of the highest missionary work, England has England to resist or to win. Would that so much of the energy of the missionary societies had not to be spent in rousing the Churches. It is a most strange and grievous thing. Would that when the Churches are roused they had not the friction and waste of conflict with the paganism of the home public, with its indifference, its worldliness, its covetousness, its exploitation, its press, its politicians, and its diplomatists. It is no part of the State's duty to conduct evangelical missions—would that it were never its interest to chill them. It cannot be sound policy or sound business which finds the growth of Christianity in the natives dangerous to its ambitions. No sound civilisation can stand upon the ignorance or the subservience of any class. Wherever the Cross goes there goes the word of emancipation. And it is no true British policy that dreads and stifles that note. Who can deny the increase of moral self-respect on the part of this country after the great act of Christian righteousness in the abolition of slavery? That was the practice of Christianity toward

a whole race. It was a great missionary achievement, and it had the reflex action that missions always have. England was the means of freeing the West Indian negroes. But the West Indian negroes were thus the means of a great liberation for England. Every true preacher knows that his people may be a greater blessing to him than he is to them. The Church has benefited from missions as much as the heathen. Remember the old illustration. A man was dying in the snow with exhaustion when he saw another man even worse, rushed to him by a huge effort, and rubbed him to life. It was the saving of both lives. So missions have quickened and saved the Church. And that is the effect upon the nation also of every great stroke of policy which gives heroic effect to the kingdom of God; and the men who inspire it are national heroes and spiritual benefactors. It will be long before we can reckon the full blessing to England of the missionary movement of a hundred years ago, or the national value of the great agents God raised up and equipped for that work. I pray God to send us more such men for public guides. We are in the deepest need of them, for we are fallen from our old grace, both in Church and State.

Knibb was a fighter. May their race revive! We need these warriors of the Holy Ghost, these paladins of righteousness and priests of the poor. But not every one that has the impulse has the call. Impulse is not inspiration. Knibb broke loose from those who counselled moderation, not with the self-will of a shouting progressive or a shallow megalomaniac, but with the information and the inspiration of one who had grasped all the moral bearings of the subject and counted the total cost. In him there was a combination of qualities which fitted him for the work he was given to do. His portrait shows a sturdy and indomitable face, yet sensitive and sympathetic. He was a happy mixture of passion, justice, and judgment; of piety, chivalry, and sense; of energy, resolution, fearlessness; of speech and action. His eloquence was sometimes halting, but it was the eloquence of facts, not phrases, of genuine passion and adequate knowledge, the eloquence of reality, *of things*. He was both a kind pastor and a fearless tribune—a Christian pastor and a people's tribune. Like every great and apostolic missionary, he came to love the people he saved more than the people that gave him birth. He took his converts for his true kindred. He left his

native prejudices when he left his native land. The patriotism of Christ's kingdom was more to him than the patriotism of his own race. Missionaries cannot afford to be patriots. He took the black people for his own people, and made more of their fellow-citizenship as saints than of his fellow-countrymen in blood. Feeling inspired action, action was sustained by principle, and principle was obeyed with courage. Danger was a new stimulus, and his courage was fed by faith and love, by pity and by wholesome hate. "He made tyranny impracticable by raising the character of the slave"; and he brought it its nemesis by appealing to the character of the English people. "The planter said, 'We will exterminate Christianity'; the missionary said, 'We will abolish slavery.'" And through Knibb the missionaries won. Slavery fell and Christianity rose to a new height. Faith produced a new brood of heroes. With Buxton, Wilberforce, and Clarkson there stands the equal name of Knibb, and above all, and through all, and in all, the name and power of Christ.

I would especially point out as I close that Knibb was driven into political agitation for the sake of Church freedom. The freedom of the Church was not a plank in his liberal plat-

form but the supreme inspiration of his public action. Slavery was killing the gospel. The planters were extinguishing the Churches. They claimed the slaves' souls as well as their lives. It was for their evangelical freedom that their champion demanded their social freedom. He demanded their freedom from men for the sake of their freedom in Christ. It was no appeal to the natural rights of men. It was no sense of natural human dignity that drew him forth. It was a Free Church for these blacks that was the inspiration of his free politics. The greatest of all the issues of freedom is the matter of a Free Church.

There is more work of this kind to be done in other forms. May the same power be with us and the same faith in us. May the same single-eyed courage carry the like sympathy and justice to victories as great and sure. And may we have grace to feel where the real secret of our public freedom lies. It lies in a Church free in Christ's free Spirit and His gospel's last and deepest release.

THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—JOHN xiv. 6.

THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

A CERTAIN antagonism is roused by these words to-day. What of the great good heathen, some of whom rose to a deep sense of God's reality and righteousness? What of the All-Father of our Teutonic forefathers? Why venture on a sweeping negative like this? Avoid sweeping negatives. Make your affirmations comprehensive, but beware with your exclusions. Say, All men *may* come to the Father by Me, but do not say all *must;* do not say there is no other way. Fatherhood comes home to us now in so many ways. Christ is supreme, but He is not the only way. That is said.

I answer first by the poet's parable. Fatherhood comes by many ways, but where is the real root?

"Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed,
Up there came a flower;
The people said a weed.

To and fro they went
  Through my golden bower;
And, muttering discontents,
  Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
  It wore a crown of light;
But thieves from over the wall
  Stole the seed by night—

Sowed it far and wide,
  By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
  'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable,
  He that runs may read:
Most can raise the flowers now
  For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
  And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
  Call it but a weed."

Yes, the flower grows in every garden, but where did they get the seed?

The first plant of sure and certain fatherhood was imported to the earth from abroad, from heaven, by Jesus Christ. "No man cometh really unto the Father but by Me—one way or another by Me." Historically Christ is the Source of our modern interpretation of God as Father.

But you press your point about the fatherhood of God to be found in the teachings of pagan seers and saints. So I answer in the second place that people often have the loosest notion of what fatherhood means, or coming to the Father.

By coming to the Father they may mean no more than arriving at final happiness, being saved from hell; or it may be no more than reaching the mere *idea*, or comfort, of a Divine fatherhood. But they are not sure that that idea corresponds to eternal reality, and that the mighty infinite Power is at heart Father, which is the very essence of Christian faith. Or by Father they mean little more than a sentimental impression of kindliness, benignity—some strictness, of course, for the sake of family order, but endless generosity on the whole.

Now, it may be said, first, that that is not fatherhood in Christ's thought. For it ignores human sin and God's treatment of it as sin, and not as a mere slip. It does not set out from God's holiness. It does not include in the Father the Redeemer; it only makes the Redeemer ancillary to the Father. He brings us back to the Father. But such a view does not make the Father the Redeemer. Our Christian God is not the All-Father, which is

pagan, but the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Secondly, such a mere general recognition of fatherhood is not what Christ means by coming to the Father.

Nowhere apart from Christ do we find faith identical with the spirit of sonship, as a constant habit of new life. We find flights of aspiration and fits of faith, longings, guesses, glimpses, visions. But these are no more than, as it were, paying occasional calls. Faith is indwelling. It is living in the Father's house. It is constant, confidential intercourse. It is sonship as a standing relation habitually realised.

That is what Christ meant by coming to the Father. It is really coming into the Father, and going no more out. When we speak of a man coming to himself we do not mean only that he has occasional gleams of consciousness or sanity. So of coming to the Father. It means returning to a habitual state—not to gleams and glimpses, dotted over a great tract of life dark or unsure.

And in this sense of sonship, of coming to the Father, in its sense as a new life, it has not been had, and cannot be had, apart from Christ and His ever-living personality. "Through Me" means, not simply "by My acts, My words, My

intercessions," but "through My self, My personality," which *is* the revelation, the meeting-place of God and man. Not was, but is. Not, in the historic Jesus they once met, but in the eternal Jesus Christ they meet for ever.

If we fail to realise that, it is because we are either vague or shallow in our ideas of the Father, and what coming to the Father means.

I am afraid we must part with the idea that there is no narrowness in Christianity. There must be. We can only take care that it is the right kind. Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life.

Many interpret that word simply of moral Puritanism. You find many who are quite Sadducees in belief and quite icebergs in religion, but are yet keen, rigid, and exclusive in the domestic, social, and moral proprieties. And we all agree that it is not easy to live well, to do always the right thing, to come out of active life morally greater and stronger than we went in. Life is difficult.

Others may find the application in the fact that the secret of life will only yield to close, self-denying, and indomitable research. And others will say that genius is just the capacity for labour, for taking pains, for veracity, for

perfect accuracy at any cost, and that success means work, work, work. The gate is indeed, strait.

And so on. There are several senses in which the great saying would be held true by many who have never grasped its profoundest sense. There they repudiate it. They rebel more or less when they are told that the gospel itself is essentially narrow, that it is a great power and principle of election. The word "gospel" means for them the very opposite. It is all open doors, gates flung wide, vast spaces, infinite room, crowds going in, plenty of freedom to move about, plenty of smiling, of sunshine, of happiness, open mind, and vague creed, and fluid faith. And the element of narrowness, definiteness, positiveness, selection they feel to be foreign to the gospel.

Yet says Christ "Strait is the gate." "I am the Door." "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." As if He said, "My cross is narrow and I am sole." The gospel is as narrow as Christ, and Christ is as narrow as the Cross. It is not by a religious idea we enter in—either by a vague one or an exact one. Even an exact idea is not narrow enough. An idea, or even a truth of any kind, is a loose, vague thing compared with the existence of

a person, a living soul and will. And it is by no idea or even sentiment of fatherhood, but by something so narrow as Christ's filial *will*, that we enter to the Father. That individual will, straitened to the Cross, is the one channel to a habitual life with the Father. That will, not imitated nor reflected, but trusted. The way to the infinite God, the infinite Heart, the way to absolute *certainty* about it, and to continual *life* in it, is the narrow way of the historic man Jesus Christ crucified.

That does seem very narrow to many to-day. Some resent the demand that ideas be submitted to a *personality*. Some resent the dragging back of the vast, teeming, vivid, mighty *present* to so remote and rude a *past* as that of Judea. Why should anything or anybody in that dim antiquity lay its dead hand on the living present, the heir of a past evolution so great, and the parent of an immeasurable future? Why should world empires, contemporary politics, scientific civilisations, modern industry, fresh discovery, new invention, splendid enterprise, and universal commerce be narrowed down, not only to the horizon, but to the control of an ancient Jew?

Some say, again, it is narrow to fix salvation to the knowledge of Christ, because the liberal

theology says the heathen will not be damned for their heathenism, which they cannot help. To make escape from hell turn only on the knowledge of the historic Jesus were to relapse into the narrow orthodoxies from which the promising Churches are breaking free.

This, of course, is evading the question. Any chances in the next life would still be by the knowledge of Christ, by that narrow road. And to those who have refused opportunities here the conditions would be harder than here The heathen who never had the gospel will not suffer so much as we shall if we refuse the gospel. They may have their chance, but we shall have our condemnation for (among other things) not giving it them before. And God, and Christ, and all of us have to bear the loss of their faith and service during this life. Besides, Christ does not say "Outside Me is hell," but "Within Me and Me alone is the Father."

In a recent writer, subtle, profound, and compact, I found this sentence—

"The *exclusiveness* of Christ is in truth but another name for the absolute *universality* of His kingdom combined with its absolute *unity*" (Hort, "Hulsean Lect.," p. 160).

Let me fix your thoughts on this.

1. *The exclusiveness of Christ.*

It is there. There is salvation in no other. Salvation is not escape from hell, but a life of triumphant sonship and trustful intercourse with God, such as is only possible by Christ. There are many influences which lift men from degradation—affections, duties, arts, sciences, public interests, human service. But these do not put you at peace with God. And these will collapse at last, when taxed upon a universal scale, unless that reconciled life in Christ become their moral spring.

And the life of sonship is not only impossible except *by* Christ, it is impossible except *in* Christ. *By* Christ might mean that He taught the truth and lesson of sonship with immense effect; but *in* Christ means that we only realise the thing, sonship, by dwelling in Him. *By* Christ might mean that He came, left His message or example, and went—like any prophet. *In* Christ means that He lives for ever on earth and in heaven, with all power for us in the Father's glory; and we are really sons of the Father as we have dealings with Him. He is the Way; but that does not mean that He is the road we traverse, leaving it behind as fast as we go. He is the constant active Agent and Medium of

our intercourse with the Father. There is no living in God's fatherhood except by living in Christ. We hide with Him in God. He does not bring us to God, introduce us, and leave us. We have our whole converse with God in Him always. There is none like Him, none beside him, none above Him in our relations with God. He is our strait gate and narrow way.

2. *The nature of the exclusiveness—exceeding broad.*

It is inclusive. It is universal. It is the sole universal. There cannot be two real universals in the full sense of the word. If A is really and fully universal, where is there room for another universal B? The prerogative of Christ is that He is alone universal among men He is *exclusively universal.* He is alone, but it is as the human race is alone in the universe. His is a social singularity. He is the sole unity *in* all his units, and not merely another unit beside them. He is the sole and exclusive includer of all. His is the exclusiveness of God Himself, whose thought makes the universe—the only power that includes all and makes all possible; He is all-inclusive and therefore sole. It is a case of concentration and cohesion, not exclusion. In Him all things consist or

hold together. Indeed, you cannot have universality without exclusiveness. The one God is a jealous God. It seems nonsense, but it is profoundly true. Only one thing could be universal. If there were two independent universals, neither could be universal. Do not scout what I say as meaningless because it may seem obscure, contradictory, and paradoxical. The higher you rise in the spiritual intelligence of life the more you learn this —to *distrust the obvious*, and suspect the simple, on all the greatest questions. That which includes all must be something unique, something which has no parallel or rival. It must have a monopoly. But it has the monopoly of all. In a word, it must be

3. *The absolute unity.*

It must be that which gives unity to all things, and binds them into a whole, a universe, a kingdom. Universality without unity is a desert or a chaos. An infinite number of finites would be the dullest thing. If the world were covered with men, man would of course be universal; but if there were no unity it would be universal chaos, war, death. If the world were reduced to a heap of sand, matter would still be universal, but it would be universal desert. Each grain would be self-

contained, individualist, subject to no common law or realm, owning no unity amid all its universality. This unity of rule and fellowship, supreme, absolute, jealous, tenacious, exclusive in its claims and inclusive in its scope, this unity with its universal monopoly, is the sole condition of existence for either a world of things or a society of men. Is it not the unity of Nature's uniform law that holds together the world of things? So it is the unity of Christ's undivided rule that is the final condition of human society in God's kingdom. Its weal is as wide as the race, and as narrow as the High and Holy One in the midst of the race. The many are only blessed in the Infinite One, the One is only fulfilled in the many. The exclusiveness of Christ is universal. Everywhere and for every man it must be none but Christ for salvation. It is not a sectional exclusiveness. He is not the exclusive possession of a sect; He is the exclusive possession of all mankind. Because He excludes all rivals He includes all souls. He is an all-embracing exclusiveness, a monopoly of inclusive bliss. He is the jealous God of love. Do not resent it if I put that great phrase in modern terms. What else is preaching? And I must fit it to Christ. He is jealous for every soul in the

mighty sum. He will consent to lose none, because He is love absolute, love eternal, love reconciling. He is our Eternal Reconciliation who was never reconciled. He by His sole rule turns the race from a mob to a realm, from a chaos to a kingdom. As there is but one Father of all, so there is but one way to the Father for all. It is the Son. There is but one Father, yet there is a Father for each man. It is the same Father equally rich to every one. So there is but one Son, in whom we all come to one salvation, and all have one sonship, and must have one brotherhood for ever and ever.

Breadth of sympathy, then, must always be connected with a certain wholesome narrowness of faith. You may remember that the great sympathetic movement for missioning the heathen a century ago arose among men of what would now be called a narrow creed. The creeds that sacrifice everything to breadth, to freedom of thought, do not send missions. Why?

Have you not met that class of people who are called globe-trotters? They have time, and means, health, curiosity, and interest, easily excited. They travel much, some incessantly. Their world is a plexus of hotels

connected by rails. They are always ready for a new excitement. They easily take up new concerns, new people. They have seen the outside of many lands, and cities, and men. Their creed has a certain breadth which they parade. It is as easy as it is broad. They tell you they have seen more good than you would think among "these black fellows." You say how tolerant, fair, generous they are. They have seen nothing which raises their gorge, their pity, their tears, their shame, nothing which shocks them out of their own finicking self-indulgence and fribbling smoke-room talk, nothing that rouses them to a sense of duty, of kinship, of responsibility, of brotherhood, to these same black fellows. Their creed may be broad and brief but it is not brotherly. They have never done a turn for those people. They never helped those who did, they never looked with sympathy on those who did. They took the current tone of so many Englishmen abroad, and they showed their superiority by contempt or indifference for anything done for the heathen in a religious way or in Christ's name. They take it for a mark of tolerant *savoir faire* to say, "Leave them. Their own creed is the best for them. They are as good as many Christians." In-

deed, yes. They might easily be better than some.

As it is with these grievous people, so I say it is with the creeds that sacrifice everything to breadth, and are interested in all faiths alike. They do not send missions, they do not help missions. They are globe-trotter creeds, cosmopolitan but not universal. They are, in the world of mind and belief, what these rich tramps, these returned empties, are in the world of movement. They are not narrow enough for enthusiasm. For enthusiasm you must concentrate, you must have positive religion. You cannot let your mind ramble and stagger about at its vagrant will. You must concentrate and compress to get energy. These fluid creeds are not narrow enough for duty, for a sense of responsibility. For that you must have more definite lines and a more fixed centre. That is it, a fixed centre. Now, that was the real secret of the great missionary movement of a century ago, which did so much to compensate for the narrow creed. It was not the narrow creed but the fixed and fiery centre that was their real strength. They had the sun, though their calendar needed adjusting, and other reckonings were somewhat out. Or, to change the image, the power of the stream lay

really not in the rigid banks but in the great volume of faith that flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of the Cross. We may have outgrown their creed, but God help us if we also move from their centre! You cannot call that growth. A town does not grow if it just cover new ground; it may do that by keeping the same population and just moving in another direction. Its centre may move with it and the place grow no larger; it only grows if it enlarges round its old centre. A tribe does not grow which just migrates; it covers new ground but it is only by leaving the old; it does not spread out round the old home. So it is with the growth of our creeds. They may enlarge, and mean less. They may know more with less faith. They may move with the times but get loose from eternity. They may gain some clearness of head but lose much ardour of heart. Christ may have more adherents but fewer believers, more sympathisers but not more confessors.

Breadth of sympathy, I repeat, must be guarded and balanced by a certain wholesome concentration of faith. There is an element of narrowness in all intense faith, as there is of exclusiveness in intense love. And without an intense faith sympathy soon runs shallow

and goes dry. And I mean narrowness in the sense I have explained—something narrow enough to have its living centre passionately always at the cross of Christ. I mean by it the definiteness, positiveness, and piety which go with intense faith. I mean the exclusiveness which I have been describing, the exclusiveness which Christ Himself stood for, which He preached, which He realised in the limits of His own person as sole Saviour. For the whole Incarnation is a limiting, a concentrating, a narrowing down, an excluding—just as the mighty power and use of personality itself is.

God has one purpose for the world, not several. Would several purposes be a sign of liberal breadth? It is a definite purpose, not a vague and slack one. It is narrowed down out of all vagueness in the person of Christ, the most condensed, definite, and impressive Figure of history. It is limited into practical, effective power there. It takes the definite shape of a single vast work there. It is positive there.

And to that purpose God has one path; it is also Jesus Christ. He has one life for mankind, one truth; it is Jesus Christ. We must never, indeed, confine Him to one age,

race, civilisation, or Church. That is anti-Christian exclusiveness. But we must insist that He is both the goal and the path of human perfection and human happiness. There is no future for the race but in the kingdom of God, and there is no kingdom of God possible but in Jesus Christ.

The race that owns no claims of other races is still barbarian. The whites that disown their responsibilities to blacks are but half civilised—and many of them but veneered savages. Such races have, as races, little claim to the name Christian. The people which only exploits other peoples is still a pagan people. Such a people has turned its Church into a curse and condemnation. Or else their Church has by its falsehood become their curse and its own damnation. It has betrayed its Master. It has sought itself, and sacrificed His kingdom. No Church without missions can now be a Christian Church. It has lost the universal, the imperial, aspect of Christ. It may have broadened Him till it has dissolved Him in a mist. It may have made Him so human that it does not feel Him to be a Divine authority in any real sense. It may have dropped to a mere literary religion which hates an evangelical faith. It may have lost out of

Him the imperious element. And when that is gone the imperial element soon follows. If Christ cease to be our King, we shall not long believe in a Divine kingdom. If He do not rule us, we cannot believe in a universal realm. Christ the mere Brother can never establish human brotherhood. The brotherhood of man can only centre in the kingship of Christ and in the cross as His throne.

Yes, He is a jealous God. He claims monopoly. He will be sole Redeemer, the sole Agoniser of salvation, the one Bearer of the world's sorrow and sin so as to take them away. That is His monopoly. Few will contest it, few grudge it to Him. It is an election few will covet. We never come near it except as we are taught by His own Spirit. And the more we know of the Father the more do we confess we owe it to Christ, the more do we see how it was possible by Him only, the more do we see that no man really, practically, permanently cometh to the Father but by Him. Those who have lived nearest the Father have been most forced to confess that it was only by having in Christ what Christ has in none —a mediator.

That is the abiding ground of Christian missions.

The Father the supreme blessing, the sole final blessing, of all men, the portion of our hearts and our strength for ever.

The Son the sole means for realising the Father. The gospel of the Cross the sole channel of the Father's revelation (as distinct from mere intimation), the sole vehicle of the Father's self-giving, the condition of permanent sonship.

It is death to our own faith if we take not this gospel to all men. We shall close our own hearts to the Father and His blessing. We shall lame, retard, or sacrifice the future. We shall sink into the selfish happiness which is the prelude of a people's decay, a social corruption, a civil strife, an empire's ruin, a debased end,

Think as highly as you will of other religions, but they cannot rise so high as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And no man cometh to abide in the Father but by Him. Go ye therefore and preach this gospel unto all nations. Preach it with your own joy in the Lord, your own gratitude to the Redeemer, your own faith in His eternal power, love, and grace. You believe, you do believe, you believe more than you are aware. You need but the crisis, the call to wake up to the bearing

of the belief which has been slowly, silently gathering in your soul. Do something, do much, in the name of your faith, and you will be surprised to find how much faith you have. Pray at such times as these, in private pray, for the dark people, for the preachers and workers among them, who have come to love them more than their white home and cannot stay away from them; for the administrators of missionary enterprise; and for the Churches, that they may be made and counted worthy to evangelise the world more and more. Pray that slowly in the Churches may be built up that faith which is not forced or galvanised, but accumulates in the stillness, and then overflows, in a stream of steady, growing, creative, and ever self-creative Christian power.

And if after all these considerations you are tempted to talk with the trader's contempt of missions because of the inadequacy of some missionaries, or, more likely, your dislike of them all—pray, pray, consider whether it is not your soul and your heart that are chiefly wrong. The Lord save us from the sentiments of our sets, from travellers' tattle, from the commercial-room creed, and the man in the train with the *Daily Mail!*

The Lord feed you from other sources, make

your religion apostolic, your belief missionary, your heart full, your faith firm and first-hand, your mind Christ's, and your sympathies those of that kingdom which underlies and overrules all the political and commercial combinations of men.

THE MISSIONARY'S STAYING POWER

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ISAIAH vi.

THIS is a precious piece of autobiography to which I am sure none of you are indifferent. Fragments like these from men of genius are sought for by the literary world as pearls of great price. But here is a man who to the inspiration of genius added the inspiration of redemption; and he has left us in possession of his own account of his life's most decisive hour. It is a craving of our age to desire to look into the secret workings of great souls. We wish to take them to pieces and see how it is all done. We shall never really know (for the mystery of the prophet's inspiration has never yet been analysed); but we all want to look. We want to be taken into their confidence and shown the hidden riches of their secret things. This is a craving it is not easy to gratify in the case of ancient writers.

They were not so introspective as we, they were not so taken up with themselves; so they left us little record of their private crises. But the prophet of Israel was a partial exception to that rule. He was saved from himself, not by avoiding himself, but by passing through himself and out at the other side. He was forced to face his own soul in order to find the God who delivered it. He was a missionary who, like Paul and Luther, found his world commission in *his own* redemption. He preached a Redeemer as they only can preach Him who have found Him. So we have here the prophet's decisive experience from his own lips. It is the kind of chapter that would nowadays be headed "How I became a Missionary."

He *is* a missionary, he is not a mere doomster; because he is a prophet of judgment unto salvation and not of calamity unto death. His speech was to a people with a future, and his word of doom was an agent in bringing the future about, through the remnant sifted from the mass. The missionary goes to save not souls only, but the future of the race to which he is sent. Missions lose half their scope when we do not believe in the future of the races to which we go. We should go by preference to the races that have a future. If a race have a Divine

future, even those who refuse the Divine message will be indirect and unwilling contributors to it.

The motives that make a missionary, judging from this self-revelation, are—

(1) Imaginative.

(2) Voluntary.

(3) The passion of fear, and pity, and hope.

(4) The enthusiasm for holiness.

(1) The missionary's impulse is *imaginative.*

The scene that opened on the prophet's eye is one of the sublimest visions of the soul. You see the marks of a dream in it. "His train filled the temple." A grand feature which could only exist in the vagueness of fantasy. It could not be put on canvas, could not be brought to the definiteness of a picture (if it could be, the old Italian painters were the only men to do it). Moreover, there is no delineation of the face or figure of the Majesty that sat on the throne. How could His glory be concentrated in features of man? The fulness of the whole earth was His glory. The house was filled with rolling cloud. Only His lower parts, so to speak, are visible. The visible world is but the lower part, or under side, of that glory which is the world's fulness and unity. And the seraphs covered their faces in the awful Presence. It is such a scene as only a

great poetic genius could behold, and a great spiritual imagination frame.

You need imagination for the missionary impulse, especially for foreign missions. You need the sense of the glory of the Lord, of the fulness of the whole earth, and of the voice that, crying, shakes the pillars of the house. It is not easy to conceive of a man of no imagination becoming a great missionary. It is the imagination of boyhood that leads many a youth to the mission field, as it leads many to the sea. It is the romance of missions, the call of the deep and the wild. It is the same thing, with a consecration of faith added, that seals the resolve and finally sends him abroad. To his visions of foreign lands he adds visions of redeemed peoples. His eye has seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. He dreams a dream of good. He has visions of an earth full of the knowledge and glory of God. He has the imagination of the adventurer with the consecration of the prophet. Every missionary must be an idealist. The man who has no sympathy with missions is devoid of imagination, and sometimes he seems even a little proud of his defect.

(2) The missionary's impulse is *voluntary*.

It is not coercion, but self-devotion. He does

not take it up for a living, but embraces it as a divine vocation. His ideal is not his magnified and prosperous self, but the enlarged realm of Christ. He answers a divine voice which wakes him to divine power and service. It is not task work, slave work, labour sold as a commodity. It is not a grievous necessity, but a joyful, solemn necessity. It has come upon him from sight of the unspeakable glory. It is a call from a Spirit, answered by a spirit which finds there its native freedom. The true missionary cannot be called up for foreign service like a conscript. He must be a volunteer. "Send me." The initiative is not his, but the response is his. It is obedience, but it is originally free. He answers with himself. He cannot go except he is sent; but being sent, he cannot but go. And he goes with all his heart and might. A necessity is laid on him, but it is one of those necessities in which we find our true liberty and our true selves. The most voluntary missionaries have also been the greatest missionaries. It was so in the great mission ages of the past. The great figures were men who went forth moved and sent, not by organisations, but by the Holy Ghost. And as to modern missions, it is remarkable that in this land at least they have sprung from the voluntary Churches.

Organisations though they are, their native soil is in the voluntary Churches with their evangelical freedom, their living faith, their personal appeal and personal responsibility.

Of course, though voluntary, the missionary life is not self-willed. Life never begins to be serious in the largest sense till we feel we have been *sent* into the world. The young hero who steps upon the world like a demigod, and has life all before him where to choose, has not this sense of seriousness. His will is self-will, life has not for him allegiance, he has a career but no mission. It is the sense of a mission, an obedience, that makes life truly serious and truly great. You should feel that what you do you were sent to do. It is a duty, it is a trust. I do not suggest that you must have a mission in the sense of taking up a cause which you give your life to advocate. That is very well but it is not for all. But all should live with the feeling that they are sent. Their work should be duty, and duty cannot be self-appointed. Christ is our example here as elsewhere. Freely as He came He came because He was sent. There was nothing arbitrary about Him. He lived with a mission, He answered a call. We ought all to have not only some prospect, some occupation, but some *calling* in life.

And the point I would make is, that the more we realise that truth for ourselves, the more sympathy we shall have with those who prosecute a mission in the great and special sense. Missionaries understand missionaries. Were we all sent of God, we should feel more with those whom we help to send for Him. Who is so likely to be in sympathy with missions as the man whose whole life is "Here am I, where Thou hast sent me"?

(3) The motives of *fear*, and *pity*, and *hope*.

The first message of the prophet was one of doom. It was the promise of judgment. It was a word of fear. He was made to see that his message would offend more souls than it helped, and so precipitate a calamity that might be long. But it does not turn him.

He is moved with a deep pity. "How long, O Lord?" It is more than he can bear. The thought of the sufferings of the whole for the sin of a part wrung the cry from him.

But at the far end is hope. Sorrow is purgation, wrath is judgment and not mere nemesis, suffering under God means redemption. Things are not at an end with the people. It was a question of the people, not of individuals, and for the people there was a future. It was a chastened future, but a

glorious one; there was hope in its latter end. There was heart and promise in his threat, and not mere doom.

Is there no fear in the impulses that move a man to the preacher's work? Does he not know better than his critics that he brings a gospel whose refusal leaves men more condemned than it found them? He carries peril as well as grace. Will he be a true missionary if he have no sense of doom and a wrath to come? Is the missionary's God a soft God? Does he go to banish fear, or is it to teach men to fear the right God and fear Him aright? "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." Is there nothing in that any more, and no theme for the preacher who goes to men that cannot understand a religion without fear? Missions decay under a soft God.

But will the apostle go at all if he have not more pity and love than warning for the poor people who are the victims of their own darkness and sin? A man without pity is not fit for the messages of Christ's God. He is not fit for the work that saves. Can a divine gospel be put into the charge of inhuman men? Is the message of judgment safe in

pitiless hands? Can we show that even truth is divine if it be but harsh and unkind?

The missionary must pity and he must hope. The pitiless, hopeless faith is the bigot's faith, not the prophet's, not the missionary's. It proselytises, it does not evangelise. It devastates, it does not chasten. It is the judgment of Mohammed, not of God. God's judgment comes in the name of hope, of final redemption. The decay of hope is the death of missions. And the faith of the missionary is a solemn faith but it is a sanguine one.

(4) The great missionary motive of the Church is the *enthusiasm for holiness.*

The prophet received his mission in an atmosphere charged with unutterable holiness. It was not the poetic splendour of the vision which awed and stirred him. It was not the imaginative glory of the scene. That might have made him an artist, an orator, but not a prophet, not a missionary. What at once crushed and moved him, abased him and lifted him out of himself, was the glory of holiness. Every splendour seems to carry with it some trace of earth but this. It is the most unworldly of all unearthly things. It takes a man out of himself, shames him out of himself, gives him to his highest self and truest destiny.

It puts the new song into his trembling lips. It endows the stammering man with mighty speech, and sends him forth from his abasement with all the power of the Spirit of God. It cleanses the very lips that it moves to confess themselves unclean, unclean. It emboldens the very conscience that it had just made to quail. It inspires with a grand fear which forgets fear. It gives a message to the man who feels in its presence that he is nothing and has nothing. When the enthusiasm of humanity comes it turns the spirit of adventure into the spirit of help; but the enthusiasm of holiness makes the spirit of help the spirit of redemption. It not only consecrates the old, it creates a new spirit within us.

It is not the enthusiasm of humanity that makes the Christian missionary; it did not make Jesus the Christ. It is no adequate explanation of Christ to say He incarnated the enthusiasm of humanity. St. Francis of Assisi, perhaps, did that more even than Jesus; and that is why with some he is more popular to-day. The missionary is not the servant of humanity; he is the servant of the holiness of God *to* humanity. He is the messenger of the Cross because the Cross is the glorification, the revelation, of God's holiness. It is holiness

and not compassion that redeems. Pity only gives the *desire*, not the *power*, to redeem. It is human to pity sorrow, but it takes a diviner sense to pity sin. It is blessed to heal, but it is thrice blessed to redeem. The missionary is the agent of the Redeemer, not simply of the Friend of Man. His deepest motive is in the holiness which is the staying power in redeeming love. He must love the souls of men, but with the holy love of Christ. If he pity them, it is not chiefly because of their pain, their ignorance, their hardships, their oppression, their life of despair and fear, but it is a supernatural pity. It is because of their lack of the holiness which is God's due, God's glory and bliss. The enthusiasm of holiness may not be the ruling passion in every missionary, but it is the ruling passion of missions, of the missionary Church. In it lies their staying power. The people who have least sympathy with missions are the people who have least sympathy with holiness. No man who is cool to missions is warm to the Holy One; his indifference to the one is a public confession of his insensibility to the other. A religion of kindness may have taken the place in him of a religion of holiness. The age that has lost the sense of God's holiness, and therefore of man's sin, is an age

of missionary difficulties which nothing but the restoration of that sense can help. The preacher of the Cross is the preacher of love, but it is not human love; it is love superhuman, holy, incorruptible, and redeeming, love that loves *mankind* and nothing less, loves it for God's holy sake, and loves no less than to the endless end. "As the father hath loved Me so have I loved you." But the Father loved Christ with the love of holiness, not the love of pity. And that is the soul of Christ's love of souls, and so of the missionary's love. It is only a holy love that could love mankind, could love through all the distinctions of race and time, and all the disillusions of experience. It was only a holy love that could be so stung and agonised with human sin as to destroy it and redeem us. It is the passion of pierced holiness that is the passion of the Cross.

Nothing short of holiness could save the people from their sin. And nothing but the Holy Spirit could go with the word of complete redemption to every land and every man. That Britain should rule India is a great thing, a task so great that only the vast political genius of Britain and its vocation for rule could hope to succeed in it. But that Britain should convert India, redeem India, is

a far greater thing; and it is only to be hoped for by the spirit of holiness in Britain itself, redeeming her Empire and ruling her rule.

We have seen in Christ a holiness the prophet did not know. It is not less solemn, it is not less sublime, but it is more sweet, it is more deep, it is more abiding. It is not a vision, but a presence and a power. We have seen through the smoke which filled the house. We have seen the *face* of Him that sat upon the throne. We have seen the Cross upon the altar. We have seen that the holiness of God is the holiness of love. There is no such awful gulf fixed between the King and the creature. We too are kings in Him. The word we hear is judgment indeed, and fear, but it is more. It is our judgment laid on the Holy. It is *such* mercy, pity, peace, and love. It is, indeed, infinite tenderness; but it is soul tenderness, it is moral tenderness, it is atoning, redeeming tenderness. It is the tenderness of the Holy, which does not soothe but save. It is love which does not simply comfort, and it is holiness which does not simply doom. It is holy love, which judges, saves, forgives, cleanses the conscience, destroys the guilt, reorganises the race, and makes a new world from the ruins of the old.

I will not plead with you for an interest in

missions. If I could take you with me in the line and habit of thought I have been pursuing, your interest in missions could not be quenched. It is useless to flog up a zeal for missions where we have lost the enthusiasm of the holy Cross, and live as if forgiveness were but an accident of religion, and only an occasional necessity in decent lives. But if our whole religion be rooted in the forgiveness of the Cross, and our whole life shaped by the passionate sense that we owe ourselves to the world's Redeemer, missions are not only safe, they will be a passion too, and a passion of the Church.

A passion of the Church. I would lay stress on that. They are a work of the whole Church, as holy, prophetic, and apostolic. They are not a hobby of certain members or sections of the Church. Those who conduct them are not tolerated and indulged by the Church as if they were faddists; they are its agents and representatives. We do not give them room merely, but a mandate. The Church that has no missions has no apostolic note, I would say no gospel. If ever in any Church culture, even Christian culture, gets the upper hand of the missionary spirit, that Church is losing its Gospel and is on the way to become an ethical school, or a sentimental clique.

It is from the centre of the Church's life that missions grow, from the holy love of God as revealed in the atoning Cross. They do not arise at some point in the outskirts of Christian faith; they are not among the Church's luxuries. Christianity itself is in its nature a mission—a mission from Heaven to earth; and Christ Himself is the "Apostle," the Missionary, of our calling. To part with that idea is to reduce the Church to a society for mutual self-culture and agreeable piety. There are such forms of Christianity. There are, if not Churches, yet sections of the Church which are more interested in Christian culture than in the Christian evangel. There are groups of people who look with a tolerant eye on Christian history, and especially on our first history, as an accommodation to a stage of spiritual growth which we have now passed. We have outgrown the apostolic stage, and have reached the cultured stage. Erasmus antiquates Luther. We have now, they say, the whole gathered wealth of the Church's ethical and spiritual acquirement to live on, and we can look down with grateful patronage on those pushing and missionary eras which were natural to a certain crude stage of the soul. We can now recognise in all religions an unconscious

Christianity which we may help to the top; but let us be careful (they urge) to develop other faiths to this end *along their own lines.* Do not let us obtrude the form of religion which suits us; it does not suit the lower range of progress. Let the religious needs of the race shape themselves on evolutionary lines with what little help we can give. Our better faith is *only* better than theirs. It is not absolute, not final. All is relative. No informed man speaks of anything as absolute nowadays or as final. Christianity is but the chief of the best forms which the religious need and instinct have taken among men. It may itself be outgrown. Let it learn the modesty of that discovery; let it not thrust itself upon other creeds; some of them were old when it was in its cradle. Let us develop our own creed among ourselves. Let us enrich our social charities. Let us pursue the sweet Christian pieties of the home, the fine sympathies of Christian literature, the refining influences of Christian art (the chamber music, so to say, of Christian accomplishment), the harmless recreations of the Christian Church, our gracious patronage of the rudely earnest and the eagerly good. But let us not arrest and distort the benign influences of civilisation by obtrusive and

dogmatic gospels to people who could in some ways even evangelise us.

Well, let it be clearly understood that these views, however amiable their advocates are, are not Christianity. They might represent a Christian coterie, but not a Christian Church. They may be cultured and refined, but they are not apostolic. The gospel is strained out of them. Jesus for them is a luminous point in history, not the Light of the world. For them He was the Teacher of a stage, not the Redeemer of all time and the King of all eternity, not the one permanent and comprehensive missionary from Heaven to earth, from God to man, from holiness to sin. He is not the living Word of God, the Holy One of the true Israel, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, equally rich to all that call, and able to save to the uttermost. But that is the gospel of the Church —the equal and absolute necessity of Christ for every age and for every soul, for every colour and for every clime. Where sin is there is the Saviour; where is the carcass there is the royal eagle; where Death is there is He that liveth for evermore and has Death's keys and Death's doom. That is the gospel, whose word is the real prophetic legacy and the true apostolic succession. The old prophet grew into Christ's

apostle; and the apostle was above all things a missionary. He was not a bishop but a witness, an evangeliser, an emissary, a missionary of the Cross. The most apostolic Church is the Church that is evangelical in the widest sense of the word. The apostolic succession is the evangelical succession. It is the gospel that is the test of apostolicity; it is not apostolicity that is the test of the gospel. The apostles were such because of their relation to the gospel: the gospel is not such because of its relation to the apostles. It is not the Church that makes the Word, it is the Word that makes the Church. The power of the Word does not depend on the correct position of the man who speaks it; but the man owes his position to the power of the Word. And that Word is Christ. The gospel is Christ and Him crucified. The missionary of the gospel is himself a crucified personality, for whom Christ was crucified, and who is crucified unto Christ, merciful, faithful, kindled, free, and wise.

If the Church do not preach this gospel it ceases to be a Church. Its faith is not there for it to brood on but to declare. The Church is founded on Peter—on the rock of confession. This is the sense in which she is founded on apostles and prophets. It is not a case of

tracing an unbroken line from an apostle; the Church which chiefly does that confesses Peter more than she reveals Peter's Master. The Church is founded on witnessing, on missionising, on the prophetic ministry, on the apostolic note which loses even the apostle in the Saviour. Martyr, confessor, apostle, these are the true seed of the Church: and they all have this seal, the carrying out of the gospel in word and deed, at home or abroad. Not every member is a missionary, but every Church is a missionary; and every member in so far as he shares the Church's spirit and life in his prayer, sympathy, help. A faith unconfessed is a stifled faith which does not attain, does not arrive. With the heart we believe unto righteousness but with the mouth we confess unto salvation, which is righteousness made perfect.

The Church is the great confessor. And what the Church confesses is neither its sin, nor its piety, nor its pity, but its Saviour, its Holy One, its King. Its passion of holiness is not so much the passion to feel holy as to worship holiness and establish it. The permanent root of missions is not pietism but faith, not our sense of nearness to God but our faith in His nearness, His action for us and in us. What we confess is not our Christian experi-

ence, nor our Christian attainment, nor our Christian illumination. It is not of ourselves, or our piety, or our orthodoxy that we witness. It is of God's grace, God's salvation, God's Christ, God's work in Christ and His Cross, and His Holy Spirit. It is of God's loving will, saving purpose, and redeeming victory in Christ. We do not even confess our faith in the salvability of men but in the salvation of God. It is God's to believe in the salvability of man, it is too much for men. We believe in it because God in Christ did: it is ours to believe and declare that God has saved and does save all who come through Christ unto Him. Confession is the Church's word, even more than compassion. The root of our missions is the faith of God's salvation even more than the sense of man's misery and need. The inspiration of Christian missions has been Christ's Cross more than man's sorrow. With Buddhist missions it is otherwise, with modern philanthropy it may be otherwise. But Christian missions are the confession of the Cross of Christ in its aspect of universality and its finality of moral power.

The spring of Christian energy is this prophetic passion to preach a holy Saviour, to confess Him in word or deed. It is the self-uttering instinct of faith—*uttering* itself, but

confessing its Saviour. It is faith energised with love, and love announcing its word to a world. It was to a race that the ancient prophet spoke, it was to a race he was sent. It was a common and corporate doom, and a common and corporate salvation. It is so with the Christian gospel. It is missionary because it is the salvation of the race and not of a group. It took a world's salvation to save your soul. You are no poor thing. Christ's work was the work of the race's head, and it affected a whole race's destiny. The goal was not a vast section of saved individuals, but the salvation of a race of individuals. Whether that must mean all individuals is matter of dispute. But it does mean individuals viewed as members of a race, a doomed race, a freed race, a redeemed race, a kingdom of priests unto God consecrated in Christ.

There are some Christian activities that appear to go on satisfactorily, whether we keep very close to the Cross and its holiness or not. Some philanthropies even seem to prosper the less that is said in the Church about what means most for the Cross. The Church and Christian society teem with enterprises that are not much affected, to all appearance, whether people are in earnest with the Cross or no.

They are fed and sustained by the humane and high-principled influences that proceed from words so wise, and a character so exalted, and love so kind as Christ's. They ignore His words of judgment, His holy demands and charges that can only be reconciled with love by the atonement in the Cross. But this cannot be the case with missions. They are sure to suffer when the evangelical value of the Cross is minimised. The great and pioneer missionaries have started from the Cross, from confession rather than compassion, from glory to Christ more than pity for men. It was the nature and the effect of the Cross, and Christ's consequent claim, that became their inspiration. It was from these that they drew their power, and it was on these that they fed their patience. The great pioneers that opened the missionary enterprise of last century were not men who arose in a humanitarian age, or even in an age that could be quoted as a trophy of religious fervour. They were not among our colonists or seamen who had been in personal and pitiful contact with heathen vice or misery. They had somewhat vague notions of the actual condition of heathen countries, nothing vivid or explicit enough to raise pity to the power of a missionary religion. What they felt most was the

Cross, and the rights of the Cross, and Christ's claim in it. They went preaching to the Gentiles, because it pleased God to reveal His Son in them (Gal. i. 16, 17). Pity indeed they had, but it was not the soul of their enterprise. Pity may be keen, but it is powerless without hope, and the gospel was the only world-hope, being the victory that *had* overcome the world (1 John v. 4, R.V.). They did not arise as the organs of a bursting passion in the Church, to give a welcome and popular expression to its glowing faith. They were not carried on the crest of a wave; they had to fight their way, yea in the face of the Church itself. And they rather burst *on* that Church and age than burst *from* it. They had seen the Crucified; they had tasted the Gospel; they knew its nature, its supernatural power, its finished work; they had themselves felt its vital bondage; they yielded to its inspiration, they owned its eternal universal scope. It was not their own experience that they trusted, but the nature of the Cross and its salvation. They knew its power even more than its piety. What they felt most was the wonder and glory of grace in the Cross, the tremendous triumph, the infinite claim, the right of Christ to the world He had won; it was not so much their own sanctity, or their own bliss,

in it. It was not an introspective piety that led them and fed them. It was an objective power that urged them; it was not a subjective dream that moved them. They did not follow a gleam. Piety has become a good deal more subjective since then, with the risk of becoming more thin. It is of the kind that moves youth, perhaps, rather than the kind that sustains age. It is interesting, charming, more than mighty. We feel the pathos of the heathen more than the power of his Saviour. We think of the Cross as a boon to us more than a ransom, of what was given to us more than of what was paid for us there. Faith is of a kind to impel rather than to uphold, to prompt early enthusiasms rather than to support them when the inevitable disenchantment arrives on contact with actual experience. It kindles the romance of missions rather than their obligation. It has a missionary piety, but not a missionary theology. It is less devoted to a *deep* study of the Bible, and more to fanciful interpretation. It is much impressed, but it does not pierce so deeply into the source of impression. It is delightful, but it is less powerful; consecrated in a way, but less sanctified, less sealed. It is an ardour of pious love more than a debt and principle of powerful faith. All which may help

to explain both the missionary enthusiasm of to-day and its peculiar limitations and difficulties.

Missions must thrive in the first degree upon the objective power and holy nature of the Cross of Christ, and not upon subjective experiences or ardours. These may readily fail many a missionary when, in solitude, the awful reality of his work comes home, stripped of every vestige of romance. It is then seen what the ruling quality of his faith has been. If it has been fanciful, merely pious, textual; if it has been secluded from the moral realism which comes from actual contact with the soul's world, on the one hand, and with the Cross, as the moral reality of God's own experience, on the other, if he do not find the Cross the moral key of the world—then it will go hard with his faith. And he will find much more plausibility in the critics of missions than is quite good for his own conduct of them. His results are still outstanding, and the romance has faded away. The society of his brethren and the fellowship of a Church are denied him —he finds out then how precious these were— and he is cast upon the missionary idea alone and the missionary principle. In more Christian words, he is thrown upon the missionary power and inspiration of the Cross itself, and

its new creation, whether men hear or forbear. He is committed by what the Redeemer has done. He has his orders, not in a text, but in a King, and in His kingdom, and in a Cross that set it up. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Cross more than from the Bible. And in the trial, or it might be failure, of his own faith in human nature itself, the missionary is compelled by a blessed force to fall back upon the Redeemer's own dying faith in the work by which human destiny was secured. The first Missionary *in* the world was the Missionary *to* the world—who came forth from the Father to seek and save. Our faith is really, at the last pinch, a faith in His own.

The missionary question is not whether the gospel is fitted for the inferior races; who, after actual contact with them, may seem to us more inferior than ever, and even hopeless. But it is whether the holy Christ Himself had faith in the human nature He read and redeemed. With a faith in that faith of His we can go on, free to adopt all the measures and preferences that may be suggested by expediency in carrying out the work; only not free to turn back, or sacrifice the gospel to any plausible or fashionable programmes of civilisation, whether they be exploiting schemes abroad or social reforms at home.

THE GREATEST CREDITORS THE GREATEST DEBTORS

"I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish."—ROMANS i. 14.

THE GREATEST CREDITORS THE GREATEST DEBTORS

THIS is a hard saying for human nature. It is peculiarly hard for the Englishman, whose frame of mind, ingrained for centuries, is "I am creditor to all the world."

But the text represents the only Christian frame. It represents the humility which Protestantism has so greatly lost. And it represents the prophetic burden which makes bold apostles and a truly imperial Church.

Especially in regard to missions, I lay stress on the fact that they lie on us, not simply as a duty but as a special kind of duty—a debt felt not only as obedience to a command but as a grateful sense of grace received. The real vitality of missions, I know, flows from those to whom they are a *privilege*. But some may feel them a command who do not feel them a privilege. And some may shrink from repudiation of a *debt* more even than from neglect of

a duty. To some they are a *joy*, to some a *duty* of obedience to marching orders, to some a point of spiritual *honour*.

But missions are a *voluntary* agency, you say, and a debt is matter of obligation. We are free or not to take an interest in missions, but we are not free to pay or not pay a debt.

Well, missions are voluntary in two senses—(1) as to a Church; (2) as to the individual.

1. A Church need not be very eager about them, and yet nobody will interfere with it. Society will not censure it; the law of the land will not compel payment of the missionary debt. Indeed, the politicians used often to find missions much in the way; they would gladly have been rid of them, as they are fertile sources of political trouble. In reference to the law of the land they are quite voluntary, of course. But before the law of the kingdom of God they are not. They are compulsory, even by a law of self-preservation. A Church which is not missionary will soon cease to be a Church. It has lost the Holy Spirit. It has lost the Cross as a living power. A Church cold to missions is a Church dead to the Cross. It may have religion, but not the Gospel. It may have Christian sympathies, good music, intelligent views, social

friendliness, excellent intentions, but not the power of the Gospel. Where the spirit of the Cross is there is the pressure of spiritual debt and Christian chivalry; there is the need for a spiritual outlet, the passion of Christian colonising, the passion to cover the world with the spiritual nationality of the Cross and spiritual settlements of Churches. Missions are compulsory in a Church by its own high law if it is to remain a Church. By the law of spiritual life the missionless Church betrays that it is a crossless Church; and it becomes a faithless Church, an unblest Church, a mere religious society, and finally, perhaps a mere cultured clique. For a Church missions are not voluntary. The Church which is out of sympathy with spiritual conquest perishes. A Church's missions are part of its instinct of self-preservation—to put it on the lowest ground. But they are also a point of spiritual honour. They are part of the higher, finer debt. The richer the Church is in the Spirit the greater is the pressure of this debt. Earthly debts press because of poverty, the heavenly debt presses because we are rich, because we richly feel what we owe, and much is required because much is given. The greatest possession of the soul is its debt; it is to feel what it owes. That is the one healthy Church

debt. The great wealth of the Church is an exuberant sense that it *owes* everything, and owes it to Christ.

Missions are not an accident of the Church's life therefore; they belong to its essence. They are not worked alongside the Church, but by the Church. A Church may be neutral to politics, but no Church can be neutral to missions. They are an integral part of its life; they are not outside its necessary organisations. As a Church we have no right to be spectators of missions, we must be auxiliaries. And the missionary societies are not merely in a similar line of business with the Churches, only with another market, but they are branches of the same business and kept up by the same Power.

2. And missions are voluntary in another sense—in reference to *the individual.* You may not take an *active* part yourself in the missionary work of your Church, home or foreign. Most people cannot. And there is nobody who can say to you, You must. Even the apostolic preacher with the missionary soul cannot always honestly and wisely say that to every individual. Everybody is not fitted for such work. So it is voluntary as far at least as your neighbour's pressure is concerned. It would be

an invasion of your Christian freedom, it would be usurping God's call, to say to you, "Woe is you if you preach not to the heathen. You must evangelise." No man may compel you by the threat of religious discredit to evangelise, to take to street preaching, house visitation, tract giving, and the like; that is between you and your soul, you and the Spirit, you and God's call. But for all that, even for the individual Christian, missions are not voluntary if you mean that before Christ he may or may not be interested just as he likes. He must be interested; he must support them. It is an evasion to say that missions are so badly conducted that you cannot support them and need not be interested. You are bound by your Christianity to be interested in the missionary idea, the missionary principle, the missionary spirit, the missionary enterprise. Not to be interested would be to confess that you did not understand your own creed. You may criticise methods, and you ought to do so from time to time; but it must be from inside, as sympathisers, not as mere critics and journalists; it must be as *helpers* of those who are responsible for methods. The critic of missions who is only a critic is a critic who may be ignored without serious loss.

There are some Christians, I fear, who look on missions as a particular religious hobby (like what vegetarianism might be to some, or Socialism, or any other "ism"). Many regard them as a fad, like a craze for collecting ebony. And they are willing enough to humour in a good-natured way the Christians who ride this hobby; but they repudiate it as a debt pressing on *them*. That is quite wrong, quite a misconception of the Christian position. Missions are a debt on every Christian individual so far as sympathy, prayer, and some kind of support go. Those who take an active part in them are acting on behalf of those who do not. They are their deputies, agents, representatives; they are not hobbyists. They lay us under obligation. We have a debt to them. They are the Church's pioneers, colonists, ambassadors, hands, feet, and tongues. They act for the other parts of the body. They are not to be examined curiously, criticised coldly, or indulged contemptuously, like a baby wondering at its toes. Nor as if missionaries were a sort of religious collectors of black images or foreign stamps, as if they were spiritual orchid-hunters in tropical countries. But they are the agents of the Church; and they represent in the Church's essential work every member of the Church,

every man who calls himself a Christian. They have a claim upon us in Christ's name. If you really take Christ's faith and service in earnest, missions are a real part of your debt to Him. It is optional with you whether you go and become a missionary; but you are not left free by the Cross of Christ as to whether you will sympathise with missions and support them or not. Every member of a Christian Church, yea, of a Christian congregation, should contribute something to missions, whether in prayer, work, or means.

We are *debtors*, then (to gather up what I have been saying), to the missionary cause. The Church is not free to make it a mere voluntary matter, nor to make an interest in missions a matter of condescension and supererogation. It is not optional to pay our debts, nor is it condescending to a troublesome social prejudice; it is a matter of honour. Missions are a matter of Christian honour, just as they have been the field of Christian chivalry. The man who repudiates his debts is bankrupt; the Church that disavows missionary sympathy is bankrupt in evangelical grace and universal faith. The decay of evangelical faith is fatal to missions.

Take the case of the apostle himself. We may

stifle among men of our own stamp and calibre. Let us go to the great classics of faith. Paul was spiritually so great because he lived under the habitual sense of obligation, of spiritual debt. His whole life was its payment. He was not his own; he was Christ's. He took Christ for a career. "For me to live is Christ." It was impossible for him to go out of Christ's service. It would have been spiritual suicide to retire to the world. He lived in a sublime and glorious solitude of devotedness. He was a lonely debtor in a world of repudiators; and his work, his service, the payment of his debt, was a joy because he had Christ for his moral Creditor.

His debt lay in three things.

1. It lay first in his redemption. Christ had loved him and given Himself for him. Christ had bought him with a price. He was not his own. He could not withhold himself without defrauding his Saviour. Christ had given His whole self for him, and given it to the uttermost. Paul could not give so much even when he gave his whole self. But his whole self was all he had, and he gave it. It was what his Saviour asked. So he sold himself to Christ as His bond slave, and passed under His yoke into glorious freedom. For

Christ had ransomed him when sold under sin to death.

2. But secondly Paul's debt lay not only in his general call to be a Christian but in his special call to be an apostle, not in his redemption only but in his vocation. A special revelation of the gospel was given him, one denied to the other apostles, one vaster, profounder, more sweeping, more unsparing, than theirs. And the special feature of that revelation was just the element in the Cross that made it universal—grace freer than love and wider than sin. He was made to see the huge truth hidden from the rest that it was only the Cross that made Christ and Christianity universal. So it drove him by its very nature out into the whole world where men lived, loved, sinned, and died. His gospel made him a vagrant, but it was the ordered vagrancy of the stars in heaven; and it made him homeless, but it was the homelessness of one who, by God's fatherly grace, had become domesticated in the whole creation, and found his domicile in the new world brought to light by Christ. A pulpit charge was given him with a world-wide parish, an universal ministry. The stewardship of the true Cross was put into his hands in trust for the world, for the future, for Christ and His kingdom. He gave himself

and his career willingly to Christ's gospel and its career. As Christ identified Himself with God's purpose so did Paul with Christ's; and he had his reward. He says so himself. But even if he had not done his work willingly and found his joy in it, yet do it he must. The debt must be paid, the trust discharged, the call obeyed. For he goes on in the same passage to say: "If I do it against my will it is still a stewardship that has been committed to me. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17).

Paul had a debt to Christ both as a Christian in his redemption and as an apostle in his call; and in the service of the heathen, of the humblest Christian, he was paying that debt to Christ which he could never pay.

3. And thirdly, it was a debt from another point of view as well. He owed Christ amends. There was a negative impulse, so to say, a negative obligation. There was an obligation of reaction, an obligation of compensation. He had been Christ's persecutor, and he must now be Christ's prophet. It was an atonement in Paul to preach the Atonement. He had a double debt to the Church he had ravaged. Because he had ravaged he must reconcile more than the rest. His old havoc committed him doubly to the ministry of help. His old narrow-

ness had to be made good by an equal passion for a universal gospel. He had a debt to his own blind past. It was to spread the light. He owed its payment to Jew and Greek alike.

Now, a like threefold debt lies on the Church to-day—a debt that only its missionary energy can pay.

1. We owe it, like Paul, first to our redemption. The Church is the company of the redeemed. We are not our own. We owe ourselves, our souls, their confession, their service, their word of gospel. The Church owes itself to Christ, and, in Christ's name, to the world He died for. We have a possession the world has not. It is a possession which it is alike death to lose and death to hoard. To hoard is to lose. To hide this life is to kill it. To monopolise it is to starve it. To hug it is to smother it. Just to repose on it is to overlay it. But to scatter it is to increase it. It is ours as a trust. As we owe ourselves to Christ we owe His gospel to the world. We are redeemed *from* the world, but it is *for* the world; we are free of men to be the servants of men. If it is really life that we have it is life we must give. If we give nothing is it rash to infer we have nothing? If the Church do not spread out into the world can

we say that the gospel of the Cross has spread into the Church? If the Church do not annex the world, the world will annex the Church. We can only pay the debt of our redemption by energies that redeem. We own the Cross by spreading its power.

2. But the Church is also called as Paul was to an apostolate for its life. It is an "apostolic" Church. That does not mean episcopal succession. It means evangelical succession. It means that the Church is the trustee of the apostolic work, the channel of the apostolic gospel, the organ of the same spirit as made the apostles, the vehicle of the apostolic deposit for the world. The Church is the great impersonal collective apostle of history. It has received the same special call as Paul. It has a wealth of positive revelation from the Cross. It has seen in the Cross a principle, power, and glory far more than national, and more than epoch-making, which will not be satisfied with less than the redemption and the fulness of the whole earth. The Church is the organ created by God, and equipped, for the conversion of all nations. If Christ is to rule all lands, it can only be through the missionary apostolate of the Church. I wish the apostolicity of the Church were more emphasised rather than less. Only let it be under-

stood. The chief *apostle* is not the Roman Vicar of Christ, nor the Anglican administrator, but the missionary of Christ. He does not represent the kingship of the Cross but its servitude. Let the Church be more apostolic so long as that means more laden with the sense of debt, more serviceable and less dominant, more full of sacrifice than ascendency, more filled with the reality of redemption, more mighty with the moral power of it, more anointed with the unction of its call, more urged by the necessity of its mission, more, and not less, inspired with a sense of apostolic privilege. What is that privilege? The privilege of being a wanderer, a stranger, a sojourner, for Christ's sake and His gospel's, upon the face of the earth. The Church that has settled in on good terms with the world and society has ceased to be apostolic, though it could trace its bishops by the clearest title to Peter or Paul. Let us press into the nature of the Cross, into its distinctive secret. The Cross and its sufferings is the High School of Christianity. The Cross and its victory is the charter of the Church. The Church that goes deepest into the Cross, that lives most on the Cross, is the Church that shall draw all nations into it. The Church that most feels the release of the Cross will most feel the obligation of it.

To whom it comes most as an emancipation, to him it comes mightily as a compulsion. The passion of this liberty constrains men. We are bought out of a debt of guilt which we could never begin to pay into a debt of love we can never cease to pay. Our prison is opened that we may go bound in the spirit over all the world. "Though I be free from all men," says Paul, "yet have I made myself servant to all." Oh! our apostolic privilege is not episcopal prerogative but missionary pre-eminence; and the real endowment of a truly wealthy Church is the laborious sense of inexhaustible debt. This is the only sense, I say, in which debt is good for a Church.

3. But missions are a debt on the Church, as on the apostle, by way of amends, not only because of what Christ has done for it but because of what it has done against Christ. It owes Christ amends which only missions can pay. There are cases where the policy of persecution in the Church has robbed Christ of fruit that He should now enjoy. There have been whole Churches and ages where the spirit of conquest, the greed of plunder, the lust of power, and the horrors of persecution have taken from Christ wide lands and souls innumerable that should have been His. I need

only mention the action of the Roman Church in connection with the Spanish conquest of America, its treatment of the natives, more Mohammedan than Christian, more of the sword than the gospel. Had South America received the same Christianity as North do you not think both Christ and the world would have been the richer to-day? You will tell me, if you read the recent historians, that it was the Empire, the State, that really persecuted, not the Church. But why did the Church not teach it better? Why did she consent to profit by such persecution? Again, the masses of Europe are hard and almost impossible to evangelise to-day. Why? For one reason because of the persecuting spirit of the Church in Europe, both Catholic and Protestant, for so many centuries. Would Europe be the armed camp it is to-day, or the hot-bed of revolution, if the Church of the last several centuries had been as earnest about evangelising as about conformity? Would not England be another place had that been so? Did the Methodists not go far to save England by delivering evangelicals from conformity? Why have they stopped half-way? We have infinite amends to make Christ for our persecution of Him in the name of religion. Yes, religion owes Christianity infinite amends.

And we owe not only for our persecution but also for our neglect when there was no persecution. We have arrears to make up as well as amends. We are defaulters even when not enemies. We have kept what it was our duty to give. We have hung back when we should have gone forward. We have not only done positive harm to Christ by wrong methods but we have denied Him His own by having no methods, by not acting at all. Where were Protestant missions till a hundred years ago? Was there nothing owed to Christ abroad then? Were the dynastic wars and buccaneering conquests of Christian Europe the expansion of the kingdom of Christ? The expansion of England—was that an energy of Christian extension? The acts and results of the East India Company in Hindostan—were these in any sense missionary? Was Clive the apostolic forerunner of Carey? Were Clive's methods a preparation of the gospel? Why, till a little over a century ago the only missionaries from modern Europe were the Jesuits. Let that be said to their honour, whatever we think of their principles and methods. We are debtors for a long neglect, a long parsimony of the gospel. The policy of Christian lands to the rest of the world for centuries was not give but grasp. It

is too much so still; but the giving increases. The missionary spirit is active in many forms. We have begun to pay our fathers' debts, to meet our entail of Christian responsibilities. But we are not half awake yet. We do not feel the debt as we must. We have heard of the damnation of the heathen, but we have not heard enough of the condemnation of those who left them heathen. A Sioux Indian said to the missionary, "How long have the white men known this?" When he was answered, he went on, "Why did you not tell us before? The great Spirit will not punish us for our ignorance, but you for your neglect."

And when we have not persecuted, or neglected, the heathen we have exploited them. We have been careless what became of them, provided we made fortunes out of them. We have done worse, we have introduced our curses and vices amongst them. We have not only given them stones for bread, but when they asked for an egg we have given them a scorpion. We have stung and poisoned them with vile liquor, horrible and shameful diseases, gunpowder, the slave-trade, blackbirding, treachery, and general contempt. And even when we have done none of these vile things we have undermined and discredited their old faith without

giving them new. Oh! we Christian lands have an awful debt to cancel. Do not say they were bad before and welcomed our vice. Many were not. Some were finer people than the European scum that ruined them, or many of the Christian traders that fattened on their fall. But if they had not been worthy, if they had been prone to evil, it was our business to fortify and raise them. It was not needful to ruin them in order to trade with them. Honest trade would have made them honest, and kindly justice would have made them kind. Yes, we have an awful debt to cancel. We have begun to do it—God only knows if it be too late. We of England have an immense colonial and commercial empire. We have gathered and stored from the earth more than any other people. Does not our responsibility correspond? Do we not owe the world more? Are not the greatest creditors really the greatest debtors to society? Our immense gain becomes an immense debt. Honest dealing is but the least of our obligations. A share in our own Christian secret is our real debt. We must turn upon the heathen the same pity and blessing which Christianity has evoked within our own land, between our own people. For a Christian people with an imperial place all social missions at home must

be balanced by evangelical missions abroad. It is our Christianity after all that has been the secret of our prosperity. It was the Church that created the English realm. It is our Christianity that has led us on, and, by Puritanism in one century and Evangelicalism in another, saved us from the bloody revolutions and social catastrophes which set back the clock for generations in other lands. And it was Christianity that gave us civilisation at the very first by an Italian mission. All our greed and conquest have not destroyed the Christian marrow of our land. And we awake to the fact that England was cradled in Christianity and can only live in this native air.

Yes, England was cradled in Christianity. We owe ourselves to missions. That is another source of missionary debt. We owe missions to others because we are due to them ourselves. It was missions from other lands and another faith that made us what we are. I have just said that it was the new religion, imported from abroad, that was the foundation of our English civilisation and history. The English State was made possible by the Church in England. We were heathen when the Culdee monks evangelised us, when Augustine found us. We owe our own gospel in

England to Ireland and Iona and Italy. We are bound to repay it to India and China. Our missions there are but passing on the torch that was lighted in us by a foreign mission. We received from Judea and the Mediterranean the faith which we return to Africa and the South Seas. If we are the greatest power in the world, we owe so much the more to the influence that made us. The greatest creditors, I say, are ever the greatest debtors. The richest men owe most to the community that made their wealth possible. We who once were barbarians have become the home of more than Greek culture, and we are so much the more debtors both to Greek and barbarian. And if we have no power to feel a gratitude like that, it means that we are lower in the scale of moral culture than we think; it means that we disown our past, that it moves us not. We do not respond to it; we respond to nothing but the near and immediate interests which the barbarian can feel as well as we. The mark of true culture surely is *noblesse oblige*, the power to respond to the larger, remoter, finer obligations, and to own in what we give the call of what made us and gave us giving power. The Church has the right to evangelise, she has the duty, but above all she has the *power*.

In the Holy Ghost she has it, not in the perfection or fidelity of the Church. Missions are not there to advertise the Church, nor to offer it as an example, but to proclaim the gospel. Nor must the anomalies, the inconsistencies, of the Church arrest its word. It will never get over its defects but by discharging its trust, and spreading its word, and increasing its power—the power of the Holy Ghost, intelligible only to Christian experience, but there mightily. We have a twofold gift—the word of the gospel in the Bible, and the word of faith in our Christian experience and life, overcoming the world in more senses than one.

Now, all my opening considerations are very real, but I have no great hope that they will have practical effect by themselves—not till they are rooted in this Christian experience, energised by our personal debt to Christ. The missionary spirit is not bred in the atmosphere of speeches, or even sermons, but in the secret, silent place where our spirit rejoices in God our Saviour. The social memory is short, and missions cannot live on a sense of national indebtedness to past influences. Culture feels and recognises that debt, but it does not produce or animate missions. These flow from the soul's inmost religion, the Church's worshipping sense of owing

itself to its Saviour. They flow from the debt we personally owe to Christ, that first missionary from God, not the debt to Christianity, not even to Christian apostles and missionaries, not the debt to history. Our hope for the dark races is not in their gratitude to our missionaries but in the devotion called out to the Redeemer; as our hope for the Church at home is not in its appreciation of the ministers of the present or the heroes of the past but in its response to the Saviour. The debt we really owe is due not merely to *benefactors* in the past, even our souls' benefactors. Our missionary response is not kept alive by appreciation of the prophets and martyrs of truth, piety, justice, and progress. Nay, it is to no mere historic person at all that we owe ourselves. Our one permanent benefaction is our redemption. We are the beneficiaries of eternity. The power that claims and saves us is from beyond history, from before the foundation of the world. The first missionary was God the Father, who sent forth His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. That is the seal and final ground of missions—the grace, the ultimate, unbought, overwhelming grace of God, the eternal heart and purpose of the Father, who gave us not only a prophet but a propitiation. The second missionary was

that Son, the apostle of our profession as the New Testament calls Him, the true primate of the apostles, of those that He sent forth who himself came forth from the bosom of the Father to declare Him; who exiled and emptied Himself in this foreign land of earth, and humbled Himself to death, even the death of the Cross. And the third missionary is the Holy Ghost, whom the Saviour sends forth into all the earth, who comes mightily and sweetly ordering all things, and subduing all lands to the obedience of the kingdom of Christ. And the fourth missionary is the Church. And these four missionaries are all involved in the one Divine redemption to which we owe ourselves utterly, which is the ground of the divinest claims on us, and makes us debtors, and nothing but debtors, for ever and ever. It is not to Jew, Greek, or barbarian that we owe our soul and service, not even to the mere historic Jesus or to the redeeming idea. But we are debtors, wholly and always debtors, because we owe ourselves, our faith, hope, and eternal destiny to the eternal God redeeming us to His eternal self in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These go forth into each other, into all the world, into the depths of the soul. And the soul is saved in going forth

from itself into this one living fellowship and through it in love, sacrifice, and blessing to all the world.

Settle the missionary question at this first last missionary source; then criticise missionaries and missions in the spirit which belongs to that high holy place—as God judges and corrects them, and guides them to new methods, through new problems, with new power.

If our Christian public is losing grasp and taste of these things, how can missions live? How can we evangelise? We may go on for a while to heal, but how can we save?

An eviscerated Christianity can never keep missions going. It could never have founded them. A diluted Christianity cannot sustain them. A sentimentalised Christianity cannot, nor a bustling Christianity, nor a Christianity which sacrifices everything to orthodoxy. A Christianity that does not regard Christ as the Son of God in the real full sense, as the God of grace, redeeming and reconciling the world, will never be ardent about missions. We have neither right nor power to evangelise the world unless Christ is the final and absolute revelation of God's purpose. Buddhism has lost its power to develop new life. It is a religion of decadence. Islam has but conservative or destruc-

tive power, or power only to lift tribes to the first stage of civilisation. Only Christianity remains, because Christ remains our Eternal life — the self-revelation of a saving God. Christianity is no more parallel with other religions than God is with other powers—

> "It gives a light to every age—
> It gives but borrows none."

Here at last we have God, and a full, final God. He has spoken authentically in His Son. Christianity is no religious phase or stage. God has spoken His last word in Christ. And it is the word of the Cross to human sin—that is, to humanity at its creative moral centre. It is Christ, and Christ not as the hero nor as the lover of men but as the Redeemer, the incarnate grace of God.

Prayer.

Thou, O Lord most high, sayest, Come and Go. So teach us to come, and so receive us as we come, that we may mightily go. Spirit, that went forth creating and redeeming, come to us still. Bear in on us the Cross with its power and its burden, its preciousness but also its stewardship. Humble us to feel ourselves

infinite debtors. We sacrifice much for our passions and opinions; raise us, we pray, to sacrifice still more for our *faith*. We confess our deep neglect and disunion; stir and unite us by Thy missionary service to newness of life.

We bless Thee for what Thy apostles have done for our land. Still do Thou reclaim our heathenism. Convert what is pagan in every soul. Save our empire for Thy world-salvation. Use us for Thy kingdom; and place us in it where we can best serve Thee, through the Apostle and High Priest of our confession and our hope — through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A MISSIONARY MODEL

"As I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ."—1 CORINTHIANS x. 33–xi. 1.

A MISSIONARY MODEL

PAUL did not hesitate on occasion to set himself up for an example. But only a man devoid of self-seeking could do this without offence. And the secret is in his own obedience—"As I am of Christ." He did claim an authority—strange as that may seem to some to-day; but it was on the strength of his own obedience, and of his obedience to the gospel which procured the salvation of men. It was authority, not episcopal but apostolic, in the sense of a real spiritual father. He was no tutor in Christ, nor merely a brother, but a father. That was his missionary relation to the Churches. It meant authority based on spiritual obligation, on his place in their new creation, and his work in the new Israel. He felt, as every true preacher in some measure feels, that he could do nothing with a Church who did not care for his spiritual work in their souls more than for anything else.

Under the light of this example let us consider some features in the missionary action of Paul the typical missionary.

1. He broke new ground. He did not go where other apostles were at work.

This was all of a piece with the independence and originality of his genius and gospel. His was the same gospel as the rest had, yet how original to him! He broke new ground in thought, and faith, and in work as well. Yet he obtruded his work on no other man's, and built on no other's foundation.

There is a proper understanding with Protestant missions to respect each other's field. The London Missionary Society, for instance, has no mission in Japan, because of an understanding with the American Board of Missions. The same policy should prevail everywhere.

Immense harm is done by the intrusion of Roman Catholic and Anglican missions where others are. The confusion to the heathen is great, and the offence to Christian brethren is great no less.

2. He was utterly without selfish regards or love of power. He had no vanity, no *amour propre*. True, Paul had a certain pride in being independent of his Churches, so that none could say he sought theirs but them. He supported

himself; it was part of his self-devotion. Nothing more hinders Christian work than self-love, self-seeking, lack of self-erasure, even among those who are capable of self-sacrifice. It is especially so in missions. Self-devotion, and not merely self-sacrifice, is the real way to reach the heathen. For this reason settled missionaries are best, not vagrant. They identify themselves with the peoples to whom they go. And how the missionaries do lose themselves to the people! Traders go to make fortunes and return home to enjoy them. But missionaries usually grow into their people, and when on furlough are often restless to get back. What a pathetic sight was that of John Chalmers, aged and widowed, returning to China to end his days where his heart was also! Why then, it is said, do missionaries not range the world now in Paul's self-supporting way? Yes, so that the Church at home shall look on, and cheer the baptisms, and grumble when there are none! How easy it is to demand martyrdoms! If individuals choose to take this devoted kind of work up, well and good, but no Church has any right to demand it. What would be the spiritual condition of a Church which sat in comfort and watched individual Christians at their missionary privations?

And besides, missions are an affair *of the Church*, and not merely of lone volunteers. The interest of the Church should be at least half missionary. It has to extend as well as edify; it must be enlarged as well as confirmed. It is the Church's work to evangelise the world, whether it be done by the Church's own organisations or by separate societies of Christian men and women. Organised missionaries cannot act in the same way as an independent apostle. If a Church ask why more do not go out as heroic pioneers the reply is, Why do not the Churches produce them? But perhaps Churches do not produce apostles; only Christ does. And apostles produce Churches — like Luther, Wesley, and many pioneers. Perhaps all that the Churches can produce is agents.

But when Christ produces apostles he gives them to the Church. Even so independent an apostle as Paul asked for a supplementary mandate from the Church, and arranged his field with the Church. He had his commission from Christ, but asked a mandate from the Church, with which also he was in business contact from time to time. It was no mere private adventure even with him. On the one hand, missions are an act of the Church; on the other, it is by such apostolic

methods the Church works. On the one hand, I say, missions are an act of the Church. The Church, even in a Paul, is the acting subject in missions—just because Christ is the great Agent behind all, and Christ is mightier in the Church than in any individual. On the other hand, the Church works by apostolic agents and methods. It has missions, and not a mere propaganda. Judaism had a propaganda. It spread its influence by proselytism from individual to individual. One said to another, "Come with us, and we will do you good." It brought in members by plucking their sleeve. But this was not missions as Christianity understands the word. The propaganda was not a duty, and if it had been, certainly not the duty of the community. The synagogue spread secretly, incidentally; it was assertive, but not aggressive. But the spread of the Church was a purposed and essential part of its genius as the community of the gospel. It spread by apostolic preaching rather than individual propagandism. And so it became a world Church, and the synagogue did not, as the non-evangelical sects do not. And this was because the genius of the gospel, and its love, took the choice out of the Church's hand, and it must preach the gospel for its life.

3. Paul was flexible in his personal dealings

with the heathen. He was all things to all men—a time-server; but not in the bad sense, in the noble sense. He was no flatterer, no schemer; he was not tolerant of pagan immoralities or gross modes of worship. But in all things indifferent he would leave the heathen to their tastes and usage. He would speak their speech, adopt, as far as possible, their way of life, meet their sympathies and needs, and interest them with the judgment and ingenuity of love.

A missionary in China settled in a village and preached every evening in a little chapel there. During the day he sat in the porch. A Chinaman went by, and the missionary asked him to sit beside him and smoke. He talked to him for three hours about European trains, cities, telegraphs, and the like. The man came to the sermon, peeping in at the door, the next day he entered, and in four months' time he was baptized, with his two sons. It is a common story.

4. Paul tried to set his converts on their own feet as soon as possible. He made them independent Churches, and developed and guided their native talent and sacrifice, even for the support of other Churches, especially the Jerusalem Church, ruined by its communist fiasco.

So it is with the best modern missions. We see native pastors building their own Churches and schools instead of having them built at the cost of societies; we see them even raising contributions for other missions. The European missionary becomes then a bishop of several native Churches, visiting, sending letters and messages, and exercising a paternal control, which relaxes as his children come of age.

5. Where Paul was inflexible in anything he started from the Cross of Christ. His was a very positive Christianity. It had the Cross of Christ for the turning point of the world. Paul was made a missionary by that which made him a Christian. If any Christian had told Paul he had no interest in missions, Paul would have told him he was no Christian, and had no interest in Christ. It was a world-wide Christ or none for Paul. If his missionary activity had flagged, he would have considered his faith flagged. It was another faith if it did not spread itself, if it did not make the soul sigh for the world. And the Church's interest in missions is the standard of its real interest in the Cross. You may be religious and feel or show little of the power of the Cross. But Christ did not come to make people religious; He came and He spoke to very religious people—

to intensely religious Jews. So Paul also began with them in each town. But what both Christ and Paul came to do was to make religious people Christian, to put them in love with the Cross, to humble them at it and raise them forgiven, to feel in their forgiveness the forgiveness of the world, to make them, not simply religious, but devotees of the Cross and its redemption. A missionary is a man who lives on the Cross and for it. Secluded from the control of a Church, he lives the nearer to Christ and the more on the Cross.

Is it hopeless to expect an interest in missions with the public mind at fever heat on this war?* Nothing is more contrary to the missionary idea than war. But then if a war is a just war, it is a war in the service of God; for His cause is the justice of the world. So that we have this position: We may be intensely preoccupied in such a service of God, though it is at the same time in fatal contradiction to that order to evangelise which was Christ's last word and the Cross's real appeal to the Christian world. What is the answer to this riddle? I am not saying whether the present is a just war or not. I am only asking you to keep asking yourselves the riddle. It is because we

* Preached during the Boer War.

do not pursue moral riddles that our moral sense is not keener and wiser than it is. To pursue such questioning would open a great many matters on which our religion should give an answer. I am only asking how it is that it is so easy to rouse the war passion of a Christian nation and so hard to stir missionary ardour? It is all that political statesmen can do to keep Europe at peace, and it is more than Christian statesmen can do to rouse Europe to a love of peace; and great sections of the Church are keener about a war than ever they were about the spread of their faith. I am not saying there is no answer to such questions. I am only saying that if we took a pencil and set down plainly all the answers that real thinking could supply upon them, we should have done a great deal to clear our mind, to open our views of things sacred and secular, and to startle ourselves out of an ignoble content.

To one feature I would especially call attention. Hundreds and thousands of men—young men—have recently been roused to volunteer their service and imperil their life, not for gain but for patriotism or for adventure. There must be a huge mass of people who are sick to death of the humdrumness of life, its stifling respect-

ability, and its lack of opportunity; and many of them have snatched at this chance of getting out of it. It is a stirring sight to see them go. It causes excitement (of various kinds), and in excitement thought is quickened. And in the crowd of thoughts there is one that looks in and I select it for mention here: it is the contrast between the appeal *of Christ* for men to go abroad and the appeal *of country*. We see what the war appeal can do. Our national spirit is alive and can produce sacrifice—it may be of life itself. I turn to the missionary society. What is its complaint? It cannot get men. Its appeal does not touch the young men vehemently, and when it does it is not always the right class. It should have men to pick and choose from. It can get money more easily than men. The Christianity of this nation has only reached this stage—that country is a stronger appeal than Christ, the national than the spiritual. We are only in the Judaic stage of Christianity—the stage of a patriotic religion. It is easy to fire the heather, but not to get bearers for the fiery Cross. The number is few, comparatively, to whom the Cross comes as a fire, the evangelical Cross. There are many, I admit, to whom Christianity is a religion of doing good in an agreeable way, in an interest-

ing way, in a spiritual way, but it is not with them a power which sends men out to a life of isolation and hardship. It does not develop responsibility and devotion of that order, but rather a pleasant piety, which must be humoured and interested before it will do anything, and which only aims at giving people higher interests, and not a total change, a new Master, and a new loyalty.

Are there none among the young men who may be here, unsettled perhaps about a career, to whom this life of sacrifice, obedience, and mute hardship appeals. I am not going to use rhetoric or dwell (as it would be easy to do) on missionary romance. I am speaking of a life from which the glamour will soon go when it is immersed in lonely work. I am speaking of the kind of life that has a spell only for the morally brave, and that needs courage of a kind which does not go with the beating of drums or trumpet appeals. You whose course is indefinite, but who wish to take your religion seriously and to give your life for Christ, is there anything that attracts you in this call for missionary men? I am not speaking to the excitable and egoistic person who is always waiting for his seniors to take notice of him and patronise him, and

do something for him, and get something for him from the Church or the world. I am not speaking of, or to, the ordinary young egoist who keeps boring Churches with questions, "What are you doing for me?" instead of coming and saying, "You are in a great work. What can I do for you?" There is another way of treating those selfish youths. I am speaking on the chance that there might be a quiet, brave spirit of inward force and faith looking round for a sphere, and on the chance that this high, severe vocation might reach him as the call of Christ. Is there anybody who feels called to go and work and wait years for a convert for Christ's sake? You might not have to do that, but that is the missionary stuff. It is not for everybody, only for one here and there. He might be here, and this message might find him.

HOLY CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

"Son of man, can these bones live? O Lord, thou knowest. . . . Ye shall know when I have opened your graves."—EZEKIEL xxxvii. 3–13.

HOLY CHRISTIAN EMPIRE*

EZEKIEL differs from the other prophets in this, that he stands before us as half-prophet and half-priest. He has been described by a great authority as "a priest in a prophet's mantle." In him the two streams met and parted. Prophetism ended in Ezekiel the prophet, and the hierarchy began in Ezekiel the priest. His prophetic inspiration helped to set the relics of Israel on their feet; but his priestly sympathies began that organisation of the inspiration which made the nation a Church, and tied it at a short tether where it stood. The Judaism which he started on its career tended to kill the faith in which he began it.

In this passage, however, Ezekiel is no priest, but pure prophet, and even in the great prophetic line.

We are, perhaps, in a position to trace the growth of this famous parable, and reconstruct the process by which it arose in the prophet's

* Preached to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

thought. It was built from a hint. He took fire from a spark, and that spark seems to have been a phrase he heard among his fellow-exiles in Babylon. It is quoted in verse 11: "Our bones are dried up, our hope is lost." The remark fell into his mind and the word took wings in his genius. They gave him a bone, and he made a bird, like the great naturalist. The metaphor swelled in his imagination to a vision, and it became one of the great dreams of the world, which is so much more than a dream, because its inspiration is the sleepless purpose of God.

The prophet stands up amid lassitude and indifference, and he is a prophet because he is a man of hope. In dark days he did not despair of the State. He had hope for the people. And it was because he had faith in its God. "Not for your sakes do I do this, but for my own name's sake which ye have profaned among the heathen."

What we have here is an allegory of resurrection. But it is the resurrection not of the body, nor of the soul as individual, but of the nation. The resurrection of the individual dead was no part as yet of the Hebrew faith. This is shown here by the prophet's answer to the question, "Can these bones live?" "I know

not, Thou knowest," he said. If the resurrection of the dead had been a current belief, or the prophet's belief, he would have said, "Yea, Lord." But he took the unlikeliest, most incredible thing they knew to illustrate the grandeur of what God would do. The people were as hopeless of the future as they were of the dead rising. The point of the vision is lost if we suppose a current belief in the resurrection of the dead, or any intention of the prophet to teach it. "God will do a thing as incredible in its way as you and I know the raising of the dead to be."

It is originally, then, an allegory of spiritual resurrection. But of spiritual resurrection in national or public form.

1. So, at the outset, note that it is only spiritual resurrection that can revive a sunk nation. To move a herd of slaves to their native soil would not be to re-establish a nation. Every sound Zionism needs a Moses, an Ezekiel, a prophet of exile, more than a financier. The mere restoration of a part of the captives to Judea would not have made the work of Ezra and Nehemiah possible without a national spirit of faith. It is the faith and the prophets of God that chiefly make national life, not national commerce or arms, and not organisation. In

some Welsh counties the judges on circuit have nothing to do. And it is not due to the police, but to the preachers. A nation is not a nation without national religion—which is the chief thing that suffers from a national Church.

2. Conversely, the resurrection of souls to spiritual life can only have its full effect, sooner or later, in national life. It has been the error of many Christians to overlook this, to think that dominion over the world without is separable from what subdues the world within. But Christian revival implies revival to public duty, public spirit, the civic temper, the social mind, and the universal conscience. The cross becomes actual only in a kingdom of God. The Church may have no direct duty in politics, but its members have. It is the constant tendency of the greater revivals to become social and national, and to escape from religious coteries, an effort which we see in some measure in the history of the Salvation Army.

But let us consider the passage in more detail. We have—I. The Scene. II. The Action. III. The Result.

I. THE SCENE.

It was the scene of so many visions, the valley by the river Chebar. Now it wore a

hideous face. It seemed a valley of desolation. It was a vast charnel-house. A skeleton army to Ezekiel's vision lay there, ghastly, not with the fresh horror of festering corruption, but with the gaunt squalor of dry ruin. The plain was white with the chronic leprosy of death. And it was the chill of old death, death grown grey and sere, death itself turned dead, because it was death with its beauty dead, its pathos dead, death not redolent of life just gone, but long hopeless of any life to come; it was death long settled down into dismal possession, death established, privileged, throned and secure.

That meant Israel—defeated, wasted, and strewn by the heathen. Its old soul was extinct, its old hopes were gone. Its sacred laws were like limbs dismembered and parched. Israel was crumbling into the deadly soil of a paganism which had slain faith. They were left to die the second death, some not hoping, some not wishing, to revive (chap. xxxvi. 23).

The vision would stand for any people whose soul is extinct. It would stand for any class or section of any people who are treated as aliens, whether they are deported or not, who are cut off from interest in their native soil, oppressed till energy is dead and faith is dried up; whose hope no more sings, but has only a hard rattle

of coarse mirth, like the bones stirred by the wind, or the British workman's ditties to-day.

The bones were many and very dry. Many. The multitude of the army had been no guarantee against death. No mere numbers can outvote death. He does not fear the big battalions. He has bigger battalions than all who live. Already the dead are "the majority" of the race. All the armies and parliaments of the living cannot disestablish death. No numbers can; but only the faith and power and person of an endless life.

And the many bones were very dry. The deadness of a dead community is a deeper death than that of so many scattered souls. A city of the dead is more dead than the same mortality dispersed would be. City vice is deadlier than rural vice. A community of gamblers like Monte Carlo is more dead than the same gamblers spread here and there. Nests of iniquity are more iniquitous than the scattered crime of the same number. So pull down the nests and make the rooks flee; scatter Alsatias; erase the slums. Spread the hotbeds out on the land, and destroy the ferment of corruption.

The death of a great multitude is very dead. But when it lives, the life of a great multitude

is great and high. It may be an army that no man can number, the very city of God.

II. THE ACTION.

The Respect of Faith for Human Wrecks.

1. The prophet passed by them round about. He does not go through them. He does not tread on them, as a lout in a cemetery steps upon the graves. They had been trodden enough. The spirit of God moved in him. His God had been the God of these bones also. Therefore he is respectful to them, reverent to them. The spirit of God does make us reverent to human wrecks, black or white. Faith alone, with its power of life, has the true reverence for death. When a woman gathered for burial the mutilated and detested remains of the Emperor Nero, "the pagan world, it is said, surmised she must have been a Christian; only a Christian would have been likely to conceive so chivalrous a devotion towards wretchedness." And the preacher of the Lord has no right to treat otherwise than respectfully the dry bones he confronts in the worldlings about him—faithfully but respectfully. Abuse is not Divine judgment. And who with a right heart would

treat otherwise than respectfully the disinherited in any nation, the dispossessed and deadened, the serfs of our civilisation, whose hope is worn to the bone, and their life-joy wasted to a skeleton? Whoever does otherwise does it from a low heart. The social insolent is a moral fool—a philosophic expert, perhaps, but an ethical dunce. And he is often himself a parvenu. Man fallen and dead is yet an object of some respect to his brother. For what is he to his God? Can these bones live? Well, at least, they are relics; they are not mere remnants, mere things. They are things with memories, things with tears in them, things once wedded to life though now in tragic divorce. They are things that appeal to loves and memories in the living God Himself, whose love gave them life. They are bones, not stones. A very mummy of a man, lying beneath the wrath and curse of God, may yet not be the victim of God's neglect. The hardened heart has the distinction still of God's anger, and in so far it has some of His promise. And is His anger not His love inverted? Is it beyond His pity or foreign to His grace? It was those under His wrath that He was moved in His love and pity to redeem. To have the anger of God is at least some melancholy distinction;

it is one that stocks and stones have not, nor the orbits of the heavens, nor the cold infinities of space. Nor could they have it though aught went wrong. You are still within His patience if you can stir His wrath. You may be shut out from His society, but not from His attention. You are still in His thoughts; you are not banished to His neglect. We cannot be wounded by those who are beneath our notice. For anger there must be some parity of nature, some affinity of being. We are only angry with what we could love, with what attracts our antagonism and fascinates our dislike. And it is some glory, some greatness, if we are still that which God might love, even though we may not believe He does. If He cares enough for us to be angry, He cares enough to redeem. Things unworthy of His wrath are outside His redemption. You are not beyond the pale of God's grace if you are still the object of His wrath. It is still a grace of God if we bear His judgments. The wrath of God which banishes us from His presence still keeps us in His memory. It is not the last hell with us till we are let utterly alone. If the heathen are under the wrath of God they have some claim on our respect, to say nothing of pity and love.

Criticism and its Action on the Débris of the Past.

2. "Son of man, can these bones live?" This question to the prophet is put anew to his posterity every time we renew the past. Is there aught in that dead past with life for the present? Has its faith moral rescue for the future? Has past knowledge or action the power to enlarge and correct itself? Or is the past dumb and done with, dead and dry? "Son of man, can these bones live?"

It is a question, for instance, which God is asking us by the mouth of historic criticism to-day. The valley of time in the light of to-day is strewn with unhinged historic facts and proved historic errors. And Scripture is like the very cockpit of the valley, where the battle has been most severe, and where, to many godly eyes, the slaughter has been severest and the desolation most sore. They seem to see nothing left but bones bereft of life. They are unsure whether the precious past can survive the critics. I would bid them take heart. Fear not, only believe. Believe in the God of fact and the God of faith. Be sure of this especially. *Faith is essential to sound criticism.* It is the past quality and the

present power of the Revelation which enable us to distinguish between true and false in its associations. It was the selective power of faith that enabled the Church to first make a critical canon of Scripture. It is an ill-informed error to suppose that the first centuries of the Church were totally uncritical. For the Bible men, remember also, the miracles themselves were to be judged by their moral and spiritual import discerned by faith (Deut. xiii. 1–3; Matt. xxix. 24). It is faith that carries the miracles, not the miracles faith. The great miracle of Christ's resurrection neither came nor comes to the world, but to men already disciples of His person. Its value is not for a world of jurymen, but for a Church of believers. Faith is essential to just criticism. Unfaith is unfair and uncritical. It is only by the critical and self-corrective action of faith that we have any reformations in Christianity, whether Luther's or our own. And this is true for the Bible as for the Church. It is only by this side of the Spirit's action that the Bible *becomes* for the Church the authority it always *is*.

We may have been trusting too much to the corruptible flesh of changing creeds. Let us invoke and stir up the Spirit of God. It was a too proud flesh, perhaps, that had come to

clothe these sacred bones in the Church's career, a flesh too established, indolent, and unspiritual. At the Reformation, for instance, some of the systems that had grown up to cover the historic facts needed the invader with his critic's blade and his destroying skill. To the prophets, the fierce Assyrian and proud Babylonian who assailed a too rank Israel were still the servants of the Lord. But the bones are there—the facts—and the Prophet of prophets, the Saviour, stands over them; and the Spirit of God is there. We have what the first century had even when it buried Christ. We have One who cannot be holden of death. And we have the Church's faith. God would be able of these bones to raise up children to Abraham—from these facts to make believers in Christ. Why, these gospels that have done so much are meagre, are but as bones in amount, compared with the fulness of the whole historic Christ. But they fix and radiate for ever the saving revelation of God as an historic revelation and a revelation in power. The Spirit of God is a spirit of history; and without faith history is not only not great, but it is not intelligible. The true historic spirit is always of the Spirit of God, and history in God's hands cures the wounds that history makes. Let us not give

the gospel's case away by taking it for granted that critical methods must only have destructive results. Faith, I repeat, is an essential condition of sound criticism. It was to faith that the first facts came—to the Church, not to the world. Is the Church to wait on the world's permission to believe? History at once scientific and spiritual will cure both the diseases of old history, and the surgical wounds made by critical history to-day. The unity of the Redeemer's gospel will lead us to the true sense of the Redeemer's person; and that will give us the true unity of Scripture. The history that constructs will take the tool from the hand of history that destroys. Critics' swords will turn to ploughshares, and their spears to pruning hooks. What threatened the life of the old faith will be found but to have trimmed it for more fruit. You say some of the very bones have been taken away, and you know not where they have laid them. They were not bones, perhaps, but callosities, excrescences. They were bound to decay on free exposure to the air. Criticism has not burned the bones, whatever a few critics have done. It has but gathered and reverently arranged them. It is the Spirit's work, this putting bone back to bone. Nay, it reclothes them with their first young flesh.

The Spirit of God is acting afresh on the historic facts on which we have been forced afresh. The very bones, were we left with them, would be more than remnants. They are holy and potent relics. They are not the mere residuum of criticism; they are relics for faith. They are not only clothed with memories, but instinct with power. There is virtue in them, and miracle. They have life and healing in the touch of them. Did He not say He came to give His life as a ransom for many? And did He not know what He was about? Did He not speak as the Judge of the earth? Did He not say His was the New Covenant blood shed for many for the remission of sins? "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Follow Me." "Every one who shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God." "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." From bones, relics like these, His own account of His own Cross, could we not, with His Spirit, rebuild our Jerusalem if the need arose? It is the gospel

that must save the Church and its beliefs—yea, even the Bible. It is not these that save the gospel. The historic Cross is saving us from much in the historic Church. The historic gospel saved everything at the Reformation. It saved the Church from itself, and it must go on doing so. We must not come to the gospel with the permission of the critics, but to criticism in the power of the Gospel. Faith does not wait upon criticism, but it is an essential condition of it. The complete critic is not a mere inquirer, but a believer. It was to believers, and not to critics, I repeat, that the things appealed which are criticised most, like the Resurrection. Critical energy is only just and true in the hands of a Church whose heart is full of evangelical faith. The passion of an apostolic missionary faith is an essential condition to a scientific criticism both sound and safe. By sound I do not mean sound to the confessions, but to the mind. And by safe I do not mean safe for the Church, but safe for the soul. I mean that faith in the gospel, evangelical faith, is essential for that view of the whole case upon which sound results are based. It is essential in order to be fair to all the phenomena. It must enter in not to decide whether we accept proved results, but to decide

the results we are to count proved. Faith is not only an asset which criticism must include in its audit; it is an organ that criticism must use. The eye cannot say to the ear, "I have no need of thee."

> "And God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear,
> The rest may reason, and welcome; 'tis we musicians know."

It must affect my view of the evidence for the Resurrection of Christ if I have been met and dealt with personally by the Redeemer. There is, indeed, great truth in the words, "If ye do His will ye shall know of His doctrine"; but there is, perhaps, deeper truth still in these: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves." The man who was struck down on the way to Damascus had very essential evidence about Him who was raised up at Jerusalem. The faith of Pentecost makes a great difference as to the Easter creed. It is by Christ within us that we can take full measure of a Christ without. We cannot judge about the whole Christ till we feel judged by Christ, the judge of all; and His chief evidence is Himself. So also the history of the Risen One in the experience of the Church these two thousand years must interpret and supplement the historic evidence of this resurrection.

Experience verifies the Gospel. History comes in aid of history. My history makes strange things credible in the history of long ago. And the history of those who see the Lord to-day is as real an experience, as real evidence, as the experience of Paul. It is certainly as real as the impressions of the scholar who only reads acutely the Gospel narratives. The Spirit that quickens the facts is as real an experience as the intelligence that sees them. The faith that felt what the bones could be was as real to the case as the eyesight which saw them on the plain; and it was at least as relevant to the result.

The Future that re-reveals Grace.

The history of the future, indeed, can have no new revelation. The Christ that is to be is the Christ that has been, is now, and ever shall be, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. There is nothing conceivable beyond the Salvation and Saviour that we have. But the future will re-reveal the revelation fixed in the history of the past. It will elicit its infinite resource. If history was God's first channel of revelation, then by the way of history, from social needs and deeds, will come the revelation of the revelation—its unfolding, its finding of us

modern men. The students of history must work with the makers of history. Not only the study of past history, but the path of future history is the way of God's Spirit in the deep. And not personal history alone, but public too. It is the nations and not the cloisters that He must win. And the great revival which is to move no mere sect or coterie, but change the spirit of our national life, will show its true genius, its public and historic genius, also in this—it may recast here and there the history of the past, but will enlarge by new races the Christianity of the future; it may re-read the history of the Church, but it will re-discover the Bible's exhaustless power and realise afresh in man's affairs the life of Christ Himself. And are we not always realising afresh His death? For the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His holy Son. The past is not dead but speaketh, and prophesieth till now. And it prophesies of faith as the key to time. From age to age God confounds the pessimists and revives the bones by miracles of historic resurrection.

God takes the man of little faith, takes him like Ezekiel, carries him back in spirit through history to the Dark Ages of Europe. He plants

him by the side of a Church with its faith dried and its enterprise dulled into mere orthodoxy beneath the pagan empire. He carries you and sets you in the valley of the Dark Ages, when the Spanish Moors had more light and life than the Christians of Europe. He asks you, Can these bones live? You cannot say. But God's answer is the wonderful eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. The past was not dead. The Church as the habitation of the Spirit is never without its recuperative power. As the body of Christ it must rise, and cannot be holden of death, however long the torpor be. The Church has never really been Christ's tomb, but His Holy Land, where He both slept and waked, died and rose again.

Or again. He takes you onward and sets you in another dismal valley, the Church of the Borgias and Medicis, among the parched bones of faith, when the previous revival had shrunk to a mere renaissance, and when the paganism was not in the Empire, but in the Church's own heart and head. He points you to the wicked Church of all the cultures, at Rome, in the valley of the fifteenth century, when the faithful had all but ceased to believe. Can such bones live? You see not how. God's answer is, "Arise, ye more than dead." His

answer is Luther, Calvin, and sixteenth century, the discovery of St. Paul, the coronation of faith, the vitalising of Europe, Puritanism, the birth of democracy, the rise of Constitutionalism, Free Churchism, and the dawn of modern times. The past was not dead.

The Revival in Modern Missions.

Once more He plants you by the English Church of last century, with Deism without and drought within—drought, but no thirst. Can that thing live? And God's own answer is Wesley and the Evangelical revival, Newman and the Oxford revival, and much more that I cannot name because I must single out the interest which has gathered us here—Modern Missions. I doubt if any such answer has ever been given to the prophet's question as this. We have it before our eyes. The world has it—and it is often as smoke in their eyes and vinegar in their teeth. But the men who first faced the problem, and first moved in these missions, had not this answer before their eyes—it was before their faith alone. They were prophets indeed, in the true inspired line, for they had the fulfilment in their souls only. They had it surer there, in their faith, than many of us who have it in our sight. They lived in the

dismal valley of the eighteenth century, but their souls stood upon Pisgah, and they saw the promised land, and all things delivered unto Christ of the Father. They had imperial minds, but they had also holy methods—two things that we have severed. They saw the bones stirred and clothed, and men trooping from their living graves at the call of the Spirit alone. They saw races roused, rescued, civilised by the gospel. Nay, they saw more. They saw the Church itself converted to missions, a bony Church quickened, fleshed, and marshalled anew. They saw that the Church must be re-converted if it was to survive. But they also saw it would be, because in them the revival had begun, they were themselves of the Church, they were the firstfruits of the Spirit that makes the Church, and they felt the first flutter of His breath. And the Church did need this conversion. There was not among the heathen more contemptuous opposition to missions than these men met in the Church at home. It was not the Church that made Modern Missions, but certain apostles in it—as it was in the beginning and ever shall be. The Church may make saints, but it is always apostles that make the Church. When we speak of the great effect of the Church on the

heathen we should not forget the great blessing of the heathen to the Church. The receiving of them has been to the Church itself life from the dead. The Church has more faith in its own gospel because of its proved power abroad. It is more sure of its own word. And it feels it to be not only a true word and a mighty, but a more genial and pitiful word. The old word is incarnate anew. The old bones live in a humaner life. Every missionary, then, is preaching to the Church that sent him no less than to the Churches he founds. When we speak of the action of grace, do not forget the reaction of grace, the force of its recoil. Deep calleth unto deep. The gospel's word to the world includes also its echo to the Church. Missions are an integral part of the Church's life, and a source of new life to it. And the missionaries are prophets that call flesh upon our bones. They are not hobby riders that the Church patronises, but organs, agents, and deputies of the Church itself. They do not act with us, but for us. They are the long arms of the Church, and its limbs by which it covers the breadth of the world. The man to whom missions are a fanatic fad, and not his own concern, has yet to learn the soul of the Christian gospel and the secret of the Church's life.

It is upon the universalism of Missions that our Church's own foundations rest. We live upon the Word we give. It is always a tendency of the Church, and a temptation, to conquer a certain region and then settle in on it, to turn self-contained, and to seclude itself from humanity in a side valley. It becomes a sect, or a mere national Church. It forgets that the Church is humanity in the germ, and that its health is in its human range. And then it becomes inhuman, it becomes sceptical about humanity, and finally sceptical about its own gospel, and credulous in the same proportion of its own rites. For to limit the gospel is, in the end, to deny the gospel. It is from this that Missions save us. They force us to realise that the gospel is for man, and man for the gospel, that the Church has the world for its parish. Nothing teaches us like Missions that English Christianity must have more than an English gospel, that the travelling patriot is the worst evangelist. The foundation of the British Church was a mission from a Church more universal. It was a spirit from abroad that stirred our pagan bones. We are not Jewish converts; we are heathen Christians. I do not mean that we are Christian heathen, but that we owe our Christian selves to an

ancient mission to the Gentiles. Where should we have been without Paul, Boniface, Augustine, Columba, and a host more who turned from the Church palpable to the Church possible? We are Churches because we were caught in the wider sweeps of the kingdom's net. Prophets in exile invoked the Spirit upon us. Ages ago we were made Christian by men of the very stamp and vision of those who, a century ago, rose among ourselves to continue the true apostolic succession; for that continuity is nothing else than the inextinguishable missionary energy of the gospel. It is the missionary that is the truest counterpart of the apostle to-day. No, the past is not dead while we keep that succession up, nor is the present. For whatever the Churches are that they should not be, and whatever they are not that they should be, at least they are not dead. They are neither corpses, nor are they mummies —whatever some of their members are. And some of these are a great problem.

The Preacher's Task of Spiritualising the Church.

Some members of the Church make a greater problem than men of the world. They make us ask, in more despair than the world itself

stirs, Can these bones live? These people go to church, uphold their Church, and would fight for their Church; they would make civil war for its privilege. They have more fight than faith in them. Their souls are exceedingly filled with contempt. And they have a name of lusty life. But they are spiritually dead; and they care for their Church but as partisans, or because it is a centre of social rank, or of juvenile amusements.

What preacher but is cast into occasional despair by that question as he looks upon many spiritual skeletons around him? What preacher has not many a time to answer with Ezekiel that these can only live by some miracle of God? He, poor son of man, has failed and is hopeless. He preaches out of duty more than inspiration. He often prophesies in obedience rather than in hope. Well, preach hope till you have hope; and then preach it because you have it. "Prophesy over these bones. Call out to the Spirit," says the Lord. At the Lord's call, if not at your own impulse, call. Call with a *faith* of life when the *sense* of life is low. Speak the word you are bidden, and wait for the word you shall feel. And then the issue is the Lord's, and you win a new confidence in self-despair.

But it is not with bones or mummies that the preacher has mostly to do. It is with those lusty Churchmen, those vigorous religionists. He comes, let us say, and he lifts a vital voice. He is a man of parts and force. He collects a following. He is the centre of an interesting congregation. It looks well, comfortable. It is no skeleton crowd. It has flesh and blood. What is lacking? The things not revealed to flesh and blood. The unearthly lustre in the eye, and movement in the mien, and taste in the soul—the spirit of life. It is a congregation, not a Church; it is not dry, but also not inspired; it is cultured, not kindled. The Spirit has not come to abide. There is not among them the shout of a king.

So far it is only education, culture, that the preacher plies. It is mere religion, not regeneration. The bones are clothed, but not quickened. They know about sacred things, about helpful things; they do not know the Holy Ghost.

The Power of the Gospel and the Energy of Prayer.

3. So prophesy once more, Son of man, saith the Lord. Prophesy to the Spirit of Life. Preach, but still more pray. Invoke the

abiding Spirit to enter these easy forms. They are less dismal than they were, but still too dull. Court for their sake the Spirit, and cultivate the discernment of the Spirit. Amid the many airs that fan them, and the crowd of vivacious interests that tickle them and pass, make the Spirit of a new life blow on them. Above every other influence woo and wait upon the Spirit. Trace and press the Spirit of God. In every providence seize the Divine grace. Subdue the spirit of the age to the Spirit of Christ. Set up among the judicious critics the judge of all the earth. Preach the Spirit which not only clothes the skeletons decently and comfortably, but sets them on their feet in the Kingdom of God. Preach what casts down imaginations and high things to the obedience of Christ. Proclaim the Spirit which turns mere vitality into true life, mere comfort into the mighty peace. Turn your worldly skeletons by all means to a living congregation, but above all turn your congregation into a living Church. And how shall you do that if your appeals to men have not been preceded by your cry to the Holy Ghost, if your action on them is not inspired by your wrestling with God? Only then can you turn a crowd into a people, and a people into a

kingdom of God. That is the way to turn your Aceldama into the habitation of a multitude, and your multitude into a spiritual phalanx. Prophesy no more to the bones, preach no more as if it were dead worldlings you had. Pray to the Spirit of God and preach to the Spirit in man. Preach as to those who have begun to live and seek life. Never mind current literature. Mind the deep things of God. Preach to them great things. Let the trivial rubbish alone that occupies too much of our Church interest. We may only coax while we think we save. We may, we do, load our preachers with meetings till they are dull to the Spirit and strange to their own soul. It is possible to lose the soul in the impatient effort to win souls. Dwell less upon the minor truths, and more upon the mighty, the mighty truths that grow mightier by reiteration, and not feebler. Take care of the spiritual pounds and the current pence will take care of themselves. Preach character by all means. Preach it more than has been done, but do it through a gospel that takes the making of character out of your hands. Preach the Lord's Supper more often and the tea-meeting less, as the Church's social centre and family hearth. Do not preach about goodness less, but about grace

more. Do not preach self-denial, preach a cross that compels self-denial. Do not preach against selfishness, preach the eternal life that submerges self. Do not mistake fervours and ardours for the Holy Ghost. Do not take the flush for the blood or the blood for the life. It is insight we want more than ardour and power and zeal. Bring to men the Spirit and prophesy to the Spirit in them. Bring to them great demands. Call up their moral reserves. It is the demands of life that make men of us. Tax them. Ask of them great sacrifices. We grow up as we lay down. "What, sacrifice before faith?" you ask. No, first the sacrifice which *is* faith. There is no such tax on self-will as faith, no such sacrifice of our self-satisfaction as true faith, faith of the great kind, faith which *is* a cross as well as trusts a cross and a resurrection too. Trouble them, trouble them with the stir of a higher life. Living water is always troubled. It is the angel's trace upon the pool. Leave them not at ease. Do not stop with putting on the flesh that just saves them from being skeletons. Infuse the flesh with spirit. Propose a great task, a thing incredible, and keep it before them till they rise to it.

Some are in their graves, it is true, but the flesh has begun to come upon them though

the Spirit has not yet come which makes them rise. They have at least the organs and the instincts of the spiritual life. They are not grim skeletons with a hole for a heart. They have some heart. But that is all. They have not passed beyond heartiness, geniality, lustiness. They are not beyond human nature and its sympathies yet. They care for vitality, energy, something going on, more than they do for the gospel in itself as yet. Or they are fascinated by a new world of culture, the clever books, the extension lectures, the last poem. Or they are full of Christian charity and empty of Christian truth and careless of Christian fact. Well, these promising vivid souls have to be stirred also. Rouse them to the secret of redemption, to the sacrifices of the Spirit, to a life beyond life, and a culture beyond culture; to faith that begins with repentance and love that grows out of faith. Rouse them to great things, impossible to flesh and blood however pious. Wake the oblations and obediences of faith. Call to the Spirit to come and seize them and to do *for* them and to do *with* them what your call to them cannot do.

Oh! my brethren, does the Spirit not make demands on us which no preacher, no pleader,

can venture to do? Does something in our own soul, as he prophesies, not stir us, rebuke us, exact from us more than he dare? All the movements that the true prophets stir escape beyond their dreams or demands. If they do not, the seer has prophesied to us, perhaps, and maybe for our good, but he has not prophesied to the Spirit. He has not made the Spirit hear the call, and brought Him to sting us to our feet, and to urge us to move, and to force us to give, and to make us do miracles that surprise ourselves. He has not yet made the Spirit hear his call if he do not exact from us, and gladly get, what he would personally shrink to ask.

The more Spiritual our Gospel is the more Missionary it is.

And on this missionary occasion I will confess that—wonderful as the record is—I should not be able always to retain my own faith in Missions if I went merely by the reports and palpable results from the mission field. I could not, unless they prophesied to the Spirit in me, unless they appealed to faith in the gospel, more than faith in missions and missionaries. This is the real basis of missionary interest and action. It is our own experience of the gospel,

and not our acquaintance with the field. For missionary methods you must know the field; that is the affair of the missionary statesman. But for missionary passion you must know the gospel, and know it in the Spirit. And you must prize it so much that you must give it away; you must not despise it so much that you keep it to yourself. It is to the Spirit as we have experienced it that missions appeal; it is to this Spirit they prophesy when they really stir us, and give us stay. The missionary passion is proportionate to the evangelical faith, and what it has done for our own souls. If we feed our central fires with the oil of grace we can work our machinery at the world's end, and keep it going in all weathers, in spite of travellers, traders, newspapers, and politicians.

So, then, when the results of missions fail us we fall back upon our own experience of the gospel. But if that fail us? When the objective results fall short, can faith live upon a subjective experience which has its seasons, and may flush or pale? Is not the first necessity for faith an objective? Are there no hours in the experience even of the best and boldest when the vision fades, the fine gold dims, and the glorious hour grows grey? Have we no

times of dereliction and seasons when the brook runs dry that we drank of by the way and lifted up our head? Are there no times of lassitude, distraction, and other preoccupations in the Church at large? If results do not come in, and the confidence of hope goes out, what then?

Then! Then is the greatest hour!

"Night it must be ere Friedlands' star shall beam."

It was on an hour of dereliction that the whole world's fate hung and its Saviour saved to the uttermost. When feeling slips we anchor on fact. Failing the results we see, and the experience we feel, we stand on a faith in which we know. When *our* experience wanes we turn to the experience of Christ and His apostles. Christ's faith in His own work stands when our faith in it wavers. When it is hard to believe, we believe in His belief. We turn to Christ's sense of His own sure lordship of the world, Christ's faith in His own Cross. We hear the command of Him who knew the power and range of His own victory, and we discern the missionary necessity, beyond all specific command, in the very nature and grace of the gospel itself.

And so I draw near to my third head. Christ's redemption carries with it the reversion of the world. It is the pledge of His final command of life. It is our impulse and our law, our steam and our compass alike. It gives the spiritual certainty which masters the world; and it gives the moral principle of its safe mastery. It brings both the spiritual courage and the moral method for handling the world. The power of the new life to come has the promise of the world that now is.

III. THE RESULT.

"Ye shall know that I am the Lord, know what lordship is, when I have opened your graves, O My people."

Redemption is the Condition of Dominion.

The principles which are latent here are briefly these. The true, profound, and final insight into things is by spiritual resurrection. Lordship comes by knowledge, but this knowledge is by revival. We know what must certainly rule the earth by knowing for certain what has changed *us*. This is the source, for men or nations, of true conquest and final dominion of the world. For empire goes at last not with ardour but with insight. Empire

follows the Cross. The power and method of the world's final conquest is a power of which we know nothing till we are saved men. We cannot use that power till we share its life and experience its control. The final dominion on earth can only be on the principle of the missionary gospel. Let it be boldly said: Redemption is the condition of Empire. Dominion goes to conscience—to morality. And there is but one morality at last, and its source and principle is the Cross. The world is to be ruled in the end only by those men and by that society that know the laws and powers of the moral soul. You cannot know God, and God's way with the world, unless you give your whole manhood as the price. But to do that is to die and rise with Christ. To command the world you must die, and you must rise with more command of your soul than when you died. You must come out of the grave of your dead self with the power of God. This is the moral truth of all Divine dominion, personal or collective private or public. "When ye possess the land, and thy son asketh thee what mean these statutes and judgments, thou shalt say, We were bondsmen, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand." It is the

redeemed, the humbled, that inherit the earth.

The spiritual power makes its own procedure and manages its own machinery. Inspiration is the true principle of organisation. The social fabric must grow out of the spiritual fact, and the social form reflect the central social power. The Church is but self-organised inspiration; its form is given by the nature of its truth—by its gospel. And the forms of human society also must finally take their shape from the need, the life, the redeemed destiny of the human soul.

Modern Organisation and its Antidote.

Let me dwell on these principles thus briefly premised. I suppose there never was a time in the history of the world when organisation went for so much, for good or ill, as it does to-day. Societies have been called into existence for all manner of purposes, till they oust the home and threaten to submerge even the Church. Science is organised both into philosophies and into great industries. Philanthropy is organised as a serious business. The Churches themselves organise and federate in a way unheard of; and some seek to organise now that never were organised before. Missions

are conducted by societies which are in themselves small states. Politics and parties are in the hands of wire-pullers. And death is organised as well as life. Drink is organised into a solid, selfish interest, anti-social, anti-national, and anti-human. Armies were never such perfect and costly machines, and wars were never to scientific. The bloodless war of industry is entering on a phase of trusts and syndicates, when vast organisations threaten so extinguish private enterprise altogether. The commercial swallows up the national. The fieriest patriotism vanishes when we can sell on excellent terms to a rival race. It is the newest Catholicism, the latest ultramontanism—that of finance. Labour also is organised, no less than Capital, in a way that seems at times to threaten both the life and the conscience of industry. Civilisation altogether becomes organised, by wire, and rail, and Press, into a concert which is not always in tune, but is still in action.

But there is no danger in this passionate rush to the mechanical side of existence? As we perfect the form, what is to become of the spirit? Can we organise human nature, and land this leviathan with a hook? Can we organise ourselves into eternal life, or thus

contest with Christ the monopoly of souls? Do we not already know more than we have power to manage? Have we not more skill and education than we know what to do with? If we have but organisation to lean on, and but trusts to trust, what is our future to be? Were all trusts merged in one, and the Socialist State thus set upon its feet, what should we do when it is soul that is required of us? How are we to work this load of machinery and carry this steel mail? How are we to escape a crustacean doom and a tortoise future? How is society to be saved from the growth of its own tissue, the hardening of its own shell? Where are we to find the increase of life which is to save our organisation from becoming our grave? If the new organisation spread without new life, what does that mean but relapse, servitude, and suffocation? We die pot-bound. We may multiply the people, but if we do not increase the vital joy what is to save us from an outbreak of anarchism which shall pull the new fabric about its ears and perish in the wreck? The mere national spirit cannot save the nations. Human nature cannot secure its own liberty against a skilful conspiracy of intellect, will, and money which appeals to its own lusts.

Have we no source of new life, no treasury of moral power, no spring of moral initiative, no surety for our spiritual freedom, no security against the tyrants that bribe us, and find too ready allies in our own greeds and passions? If organisation grow, there must grow also a new volume of life. Because this life is our final safety, it is our first need. Where is it to come from? "Ye shall know," said the Lord, "when I have brought you out of your graves." The efficiency of the world must be carried by a sufficiency of the Spirit; its machinery must be worked by new Divine power. Empire must obey inspiration. The last great battle of the West must be won by a spiritual power. The worldly spirit cannot hold the world. Our increase of resources must be controlled by an increase of faith, by that permanent enhancement of man which faith alone brings. Economic adventure must be balanced by spiritual courage and enterprise. Christ must rise in us more than we rise to the hour. The energy of our advance must be ruled by the power and purpose of His resurrection. It is power we need to manage power. Power! It is not high spirit but Holy Spirit. It is moral insight and spiritual courage. It is courage and resource to confront

the problems and perils that do not occur to our common thoughts, our common Press, our common Parliament. It is courage to conquer a dread of ourselves that would overwhelm us if we saw and knew ourselves as we are read by the high and holy eyes that inhabit Eternity. It is power to confront the inevitable time when our tough self-satisfaction is rent from top to bottom, and we shall have to know ourselves for the moral laggards, traitors, or rebels that we are to the Lord of the moral world. The Titan is weary often, and it is because he is worldly and defies the holy gods. What troubles and threatens us most is not the pathlessness of a dark world, but misgiving about our own self, disenchantment with our schemes, and despair of our own fidelity. What we need is the kind of power that will enable us to go on and still conquer when our robust assurance fails, when we have gone through the disillusionment which comes from exhausting the world we range, from neglecting our conscience, or betraying it, and then finding ourselves out. It is depressing enough to be found out, but it is crushing to find ourselves out. Is there no spirit to find and save us in that hour where we have hidden ourselves away among the

stuff? If there be none, if we have no such Discoverer, Redeemer, Quickener, we have no God, no kingdom, no courage, no future. It is in His Redemption that we must find our last power to master life, and our supreme ethic to rule the world. Not all the pushing premiers of the time can secure our place if we are too energetic to wait upon the Lord, too impatient to stay and be saved, and too self-sure to tolerate the Cross. It is in God's forgiveness that we find the humility that has the promise of freedom and the imperial secret. It is in His Cross that we find the ethics that inherit the earth. The future of the world is theirs who have the secret of the moral world. When He has brought us from our graves, then we shall know how heaven's missions are spread, worlds are won, and stable empires made. To the good, easy Briton who keeps his goodness in one pocket and his politics in another what I say must seem nothing but fantastic. Yet with all the apostles, and before every Festus, it must be said. The secret of Christ is the final empire of the world. The missionary Gospel is the only imperial principle in permanence. How can we master where we do not know? It is man we want to master, and life. And we only know life, man, and

the moral world in the Cross. We only know them when we do much more than know, when we trust, and when we experience their moral salvation. The world was made for the Cross. We ride out all the storms of history, and have the reversion of all policy because we are, and in so far as we are, saved. We conquer fate because we are so much more than conquerors—we are redeemed. The hero who remains hero stands upon the saint. The nation that survives is the nation of the just. And any final heroism of man, any beneficent valour or greatness, is due to the redeeming holiness of God. It is the breath of a Spirit which quickens and masters, because it is a holy Spirit, and works in a holy way.

National Idealism and the Kingdom of God.

Patriotism and its devotion are things that worthily lay hold on our imagination. They are great virtues and fine. But they are not by themselves things whereby a soul lives, or a people. The final human weal depends not on magnanimity or devotion, but on a righteousness whose source is the principle of the Cross. And by that I mean something not only beyond fair play and equal laws, but beyond political idealism and the

sacrifices it can rouse. It is possible to combine with much toil and large sacrifice a total lack of moral quality or Christian faith. It is possible to combine with a life devoted to vast patriotic visions conduct released from moral scruples. Napoleon's order of greatness was as unscrupulous as it was large; it was red with ruin, and it cursed a whole people with visions of glory which quenched the passion of duty and debased the public soul to the Second Empire and its sequels. Our ideals and sacrifices, however large or public, must be inspired and controlled by ends in themselves moral and Divine. The devotions of empire have all something stagey about them, unless they are suffused by the principles of the Kingdom of God. All the glories of the mere natural man run out to a final unreality when they are set forth on a universal scale. The Kingdom of God is the only universal society, and every nation or Church is doomed to shipwreck which will not accept its place there. Neither affections nor virtues exist for themselves. But our ethics to-day are suffering from the literary and religious glorification of love for its own sake, and the idea of sacrifice is becoming debased by an æsthetic idolatry of mere sacrifice and mere bravery. Both the love and the sacrifice bear so much about

themselves that they grow self-conscious. They "fancy themselves." They dress for the public and count on the Press. How nauseous are the ideals of love or sacrifice that nourish the young Briton of both sexes in the sixpenny magazine! They are not set in a moral atmosphere and a holy end. They are cut off from faith. Before I admire sacrifice, or any ardour, I wish to know its object, its inspiration, its methods. What brought a world from its grave was not the ideals of Christ, not Messianic visions, nor self-sacrifice for them. Christ's victory came by refusing some of these grandiose visions for those of secret, severe, and holy obedience to the Holy law. It was by His hallowing once and always, in the world's most vast, public, and decisive act, God's Holy but dishallowed Name. Every State is chiefly saved by those in it who worship an unpopular God. It is not ideals that save, nor guesses; not dreams, sacrifices, nor genius—but sanctity. I do feel—we all feel—the spell of huge personalities, forceful, captivating, and imaginative. But I feel their limits still more. The man of blood and iron was bewildered and beaten by the spiritual power of Rome. The Armada was broken upon a people it despised. Cromwell himself, by forcing even freedom, ran the hilt of his

matchless sword into his own mighty and making hand, and he gave his work by its military success the sentence of premature collapse. The most colossal personality succumbs to death; but death itself has succumbed to a personality more than colossal in Christ. It is more than colossal not because more forceful, but because He was more of a power, more eternal as the Holy One and the Just. The mightiest personality in history is the Holy One. He is the first, and He will be the last. The greatest power we know is holiness—the most quick and piercing, the most subtle, pervasive, and permanent. The Holy Christ is the chief of the great Powers of Europe to-day. It is not from Him that holiness has become for the world a negative idea, cloistered and feeble. The first care to Christ was not that He should sacrifice Himself for an ideal; it was that He should practically and historically glorify the holiness of God as the most real of earthly affairs. He died to bless man, but still more to glorify God. And upon His people, the first charge in Church or State must always be, not the happiness of men, but the holiness of God. The Christian man's chief end is to glorify a Holy God in all things, public and private. Our aspirations

must follow our prayers; our public dreams must follow our most common prayer, which always begins, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Holiness be made real, as in heaven's affairs so in earth's." When the Church can make that note practical in human things, then the Church will call the peoples from their graves. She will set up realms based on something more blessed and permanent, something more missionary, than the egoisms and rivalries of race.

It already means much that in the present war so many of our people on both sides have sought justification beyond England's rights in England's duty to the righteous purpose of God for the world. Our very divisions have that new and ennobling feature. (I wish to say this lest I might be charged with the indecency of passing any partisan judgment here on current affairs.) Generosity and sacrifice can silence many tongues, and stir much praise, but are we not all convinced that it is public righteousness that exalteth a nation, and holiness that hallows sacrifice? How can we prosper if we are moving about in a world not realised? And the world is not realised till we find its moral soul. And God has revealed, nay re-created, that in the moral trans-

action of the Cross, God and His kingdom are for many of the mighty potsherds of earth but an even chance; and their prancing schemes for history fall and break their neck because they put their foot into the little mole-hill of this "perhaps."

The knowledge that makes long history and holds the far future is the knowledge of a kingdom-making, nation-waking God, righteous even to holiness, and holy enough to redeem us from our moral graves. In a word, it is the missionary idea, the missionary faith, and the missionary policy that has the key of Empire and the long, last reversion of the wide world's future. If the Christian Church go to the heathen with one word, and the Christian State with another, for what can we hope? There is no sure future to godless dreams, godless commerce, yea, or even to godless ardour for the just and free. It is possible to spread even justice and freedom by ways which civilise at first, but debase at last, and which exploit the world far faster than they can save it. The missionary spirit is the spirit which brings men and nations out of their graves through a holy resurrection, and a resurrection unto godliness. Do you tell me this is a preacher's extravagance? Nay,

it is apostolic penetration and boldness. It is not mine. I do but paraphrase the New Testament. It is the possession of that book that makes the schism and malaise in our public soul and our impetuous civilisation. It is from there that a spirit issues which arrests, astonishes, and troubles us in the night. At any rate, it is there, at that faith, that the great audacities of the missionary passion are fed. And I confess to you that I see more that is grand, sure, and practical in the visions of an original missionary pioneer than in those of the greatest empire-builders. I think more of the dreams of Carey than of Clive. Clive was, indeed, a great man, and he attracts the national imagination; but the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he. The violent may take, but it is the meek that inherit and the just that keep. The spirit which possesses the earth, and keeps possession, is inspired at the Folly of the Cross.

The Irony of the Kingdom.

"The weakness of the Cross!" From far beyond these walls I can hear the scorner say, "It is the greatest decadence in history, and can become the most unctuous." And this voice of Nietsche finds an echo in the secret heart and

practical conduct of many a spirit less bold. The greatest decadence! It is the sublimest irony of history. So quiet, so awful; so absurd, so irresistible. It mocks the wisdom of the wise and the valour of the brave. The terrible ones are brought to nought. It is as mighty as the heavens, that see all things, and outlive them, and still smile subtly, securely on. The weakness of the Cross is the greatest pitfall on earth; and it mocks the empire-makers as it establishes its power upon their wreck, and thrusts its fine spells through the crevices of their untempered walls.

This is all very ridiculous, of course, but they laugh best who laugh last. One sits eternal in heaven and laughs. I think I do measure with some adequacy the power of paganism at home and abroad. And it does seem very ridiculous, I admit, to think of the conversion of the races of the East to Christ, or of the peoples of Europe to the principles of the gospel. It is as ridiculous as Christ before Pilate, as ironical as the Judge of all the earth sentenced by a forgotten Sanhedrim. Oh, I know that ridicule and folly. I know it for the very power and irony of God. If you ask me whether these wrecks and relics of conscience in Europe or elsewhere can live, I must frankly say "I do

not know; I doubt it. I do not wonder that many doubt it, and that the world disbelieves it. I do not know it from any induction, but I believe it—I am sure of it." And I am sure because I know this:—

1. First, I know that God has made life out of my shipwreck. That is my experience. He has opened my grave and made me live. He has clothed my bones with flesh, and stirred me with life and hope. And if He has done that for me, then the incredible miracle is in principle done that saves the world.

2. For the second thing I know is this, that, according to the mind of Christ, and the experience of His apostles in every age, I have only been saved by something which, in the same act, also saved the world. It took a world's salvation to save me; and what I know in this matter for me I foreknow for mankind. My salvation has the prophetic spirit of a world's redemption. The prophetic spirit is not knowing the future, but knowing Him who does. Missions depend not on a foresight of the Church's triumph, but on an insight into the Gospel's purpose and power. We see not yet all things subdued, but we see Jesus. I am saved by the Cross and Resurrection of One who was not one, but all mankind's

epitome, promise, and surety. This I know, namely, "O Lord, Thou knowest." If I do not know the world's future and its possibilities, God knows.

3. And this God has told and moved me how to act. He has told me to treat every man as saveable; therefore every man is saveable. And He has commanded and inspired His Church to act as if from these wrecks of men He could by His breath make armies of the Lord. Therefore, by faith I know they can be so made. He has made man's possibilities to be the Church's opportunity, and man's need the Church's duty—nay, its safety. If I refuse His Word I derange my own soul. I can only go on to my own salvation if I recognise that God in saving me has charged Himself with the salvation of my kind, and put some of the responsibility on me. Our missions cast us upon the fundamental right and faith of the Church itself. The charter of both is the same. To lose faith in man under God is, in due time, to lose faith also in a God over man.

But it should not be so hard to believe in a missionary future if there were not something wrong with our Christian present; nor to believe for the dark races if we were more

sound about the white. We are straitened in ourselves. We are still in our graves, buried alive. And when the trouble is lack of power, what is there to do but pray? We are alive enough surely to believe in prayer.

Let us Pray.

O Lord, bid us come forth. We are in our graves. Lord, raise us up! We are bound in grave-clothes; loose us and let us go. We are tied up in our habits, our views, our pursuits, our prejudices, our egotisms, our politics, our interests, our fears, our passions, our fashions, our friends, our sects, our creeds. And our life is stale, our bones are dry, and we are weary, our little souls are easily weary of so great a world. It presses on us like a weight and frost of earth. All we often seem able to do is to turn in our coffin. Lord, Lord, open unto us! Open our graves, clothe our bones with flesh, and inspire our flesh with freedom by Thy Spirit. Thou hast given to us for our deepest passion the passion to be free, because we are made in Thy image, and Thine own deepest passion is the passion to redeem us and set us free. Raise us from the dead. Set us on our feet. Put us back in our own land. This is not our own land.

We are exiles, and we are too content. We are secluded, buried, and very dry, in a valley out of the way. Bring us forth into the great traffic of the Kingdom. There is our native land. Lord of life, we can only live in Thee. Thou art our native land. Restore us to Thee. We can know Thee only by sharing Thy life, and win Thy world only by sharing Thy victory. Breathe into us Thy breath. Lift us with Thy viewless Spirit. We faint, we fail, we die; we lie, we parch, we bleach upon the valley of battle where Thy enemies prevail and the fowls of heaven pick us bare. Do Thou clothe our bones, quicken our flesh, kindle our powers, and create us anew. And the valley of death shall be a gate of hope, and because we have fallen we shall rise to a humbler life and move to a holier land.

O Christ, Redeemer of the world, Thou Open Door and Thou Living Way, Thou certainty of truth and assurance of salvation; by the open mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation, by Thy Cross and Passion, by Thy precious death and burial, and by the coming of Thy kingdom, have mercy on those who are dead and buried here.

By Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, good

Lord, open our graves, enlarge our hearts, and deliver our souls into their native land.

Give us our brethren for a care and the heathen for our desire. Roll away the stone of our self-concern. Break the seal of our satisfied slumber and the delusion of our prosperous dreams. Fulfil with the fulness of the heathen the fulness of our salvation. We are not what we might be to Thee because they are not what they should be to us. Lord, lay them on our heart. On Thy heart we have all lain, and so Thou wast our Saviour. Bring us into the fulness of knowledge and strength of salvation through the risen might, grace, and glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.

UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, THE [illegible] PRESS, WOKING AND LONDON.

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Forsyth, Peter Taylor, 1848-1921.
Missions in state and church; sermons and addresses. Cincinnati, Jennings & Graham [190-?]
vii, 344p. 21cm.

1. Missions--Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Title.

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